

# JOHN

## INTRODUCTION

It is generally assumed that the Gospel of John is easy to understand. Often you hear the cliché, "The Gospel of John is the simple Gospel." And the simplicity of the language has deceived a great many folk. It is written in monosyllabic and disyllabic words. Let me lift out a couple of verses to illustrate. Notice how simple these words are: "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" ([John 1:11-12](#)).

We have no problem with the words themselves, but actually we're dealing here with the most profound Gospel. Take an expression like this: "ye in me, and I in you" which appears in [John 14:20](#). Seven words -- one conjunction, two prepositions and four pronouns -- and you could ask any child in the fourth grade the meaning of any one of those words and he could give you a definition. But you put them together -- "ye in me, and I in you" -- and neither the most profound theologian nor the greatest philosopher has ever been able to probe the depths of their meaning. "Ye in me" we know means salvation; "and I in you" means sanctification, but beyond that none of us can go very far. We think, sometimes, because we know the meaning of words that we know what is being said. The words are simple, but the meaning is deep.

Jerome said of John's Gospel, "John excels in the depths of divine mysteries." And no truer statement was ever made. Dr. A. T. Pierson put it like this, "It touches the heart of Christ."

Though it is assumed that John is the simple Gospel, it's not always assumed that the apostle John is the author of it. The Baur-Tübingen School in Germany years ago began an attack upon the Gospel of John. And this has been a place where the liberal has really had a field day. I took a course in seminary (even in my day) on the authorship of the Gospel of John. The professor finally concluded the course by saying he thought John was the author. A wag in the class remarked, "Well, I believed John wrote it before I started the class and I believe it now, so I just wasted a semester!" Let me assure you that we are not going to waste time here relative to the authorship of this Gospel other than to mention two statements that make it quite obvious that John is the writer of it.

One of the reasons it was felt that John might not be the writer was because Papias (I've quoted him now for each of the Gospels) was thought to have never mentioned the authorship of John. But Professor Tischendorf, the German who found the Codex Sinaiticus, which is probably our best manuscript of the Old Testament, down in Saint Catherine's Monastery in the Sinaitic peninsula, was working in the Vatican library when he came upon an old manuscript that has a quotation from Papias in which it was made clear that John was the author of this Gospel. I personally wouldn't want any better authority than that. Also, Clement of Alexandria, who lived about B.C. 200, makes the statement that John was persuaded by friends and also moved by the Spirit of God to write a spiritual Gospel. And I believe that the Gospel of John is that spiritual Gospel. In my mind there's not a shadow of doubt that John is the author.

However, the more significant question is: Why did John write his Gospel? It was the last one written, probably close to B.C. 100. All the other apostles were dead, the writers of the New Testament were all gone, and he alone was left. In an attempt to answer this question we find again a diversity of theories. There are those who say that it was written to meet the first heresy of the church which was Gnosticism. The Gnostics believed that Jesus was God but not man at all, that the apostles only thought they saw Him, but actually did not. And Irenaeus expressly makes the statement that the purpose of John was to confute the Gnostic Cerinthus. But Tholuck makes it very clear that this is not a polemic Gospel at all and he is not attempting to meet that issue. Also, there are those who say that it is a supplement to what the others had written, that he merely added other material. But Hase answers that by saying, "This Gospel is no mere patchwork to fill up a vacant space."

You see, these theories do not give an adequate answer to account for all the peculiar facts that are in this Gospel which a true explanation must do. And, in my judgment, the only satisfactory explanation is that John wrote at the request of the church which already had three Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke were being circulated) and wanted something more spiritual and deep, something that would enable them to grow. That's exactly what Augustine, the great saint of the early church, said:

In the four Gospels, or rather in the four books of the one Gospel, the Apostle St. John not undeservedly with reference to his spiritual understanding compared to an eagle, has lifted higher, and far more sublimely than the other three, his proclamation, and in lifting it up he has wished our hearts also to be lifted (Gregory, Key to the Gospels, pp. 285-286).

That is the purpose of the Gospel of John. That is the reason that he wrote it.

Accordingly, therefore, when we come to the Gospel of John, we find that he does not take us to Bethlehem. We will never grow spiritually by singing "O Little Town of Bethlehem" umpteen times at Christmas. John won't take us to Bethlehem because he wants you and me to grow as believers. John takes us down the silent corridors of eternity, through the vast emptiness of space, to a beginning that is not a beginning at all. "In the beginning was the Word" ([John 1:1](#)). Some say that this world came into being three billion years ago. I think they're pikers. I think it has been around a lot longer than that. What do you think God has been doing in eternity past, twiddling His thumbs? May I say to you, He had a great deal to do in the past, and He has eternity behind Him. So when you read, "In the beginning," go as far back as your little mind can go into eternity past, put down your peg -- and Jesus Christ comes out of eternity to meet you. "In the beginning was [not is] the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" ([John 1:1](#)). Then come on down many more billions of years. "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" ([John 1:3](#)). Then John, in the fourteenth verse, takes another step: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" ([John 1:14](#)).

The Greek philosophers and the Greek mind for which Luke wrote would stop right there and say, "We're through with you. We can't follow you." But John was not writing for them, and he goes even further. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten

Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" ([John 1:18](#)). "Declared him" is exegeted Him, led Him out in the open where man can see Him and come to know Him. The Man who had no origin is the Son who comes out of eternity.

Luke, who was a medical doctor, looked at Him under a "microscope." Though John's method is altogether different, he comes to the same conclusion as did Luke. You could never call John's method scientific. The Christian who has come to a knowledge of Christ and faith in Him doesn't need to have the virgin birth gone over again; he already believes that. Therefore, when he comes to the Gospel of John, he finds sheer delight and joy unspeakable as he reads and studies it.

Unfortunately, though, he thinks the unbeliever ought to have it also. And you'll find it is used in personal work more than any other Gospel. After all, doesn't the average Christian consider it the simple Gospel? Is it simple? It's profound. It's for believers. It enables them to grow.

When I was a pastor in Pasadena, I had a doctor friend who, because of his position, was able to get together students at Cal Tech for a Bible class. Do you know what he taught? You're right, the Gospel of John. He told me, "You know, I really shook that bunch of boys with the first chapter." I met him several weeks after that and asked him how the class was getting on. "Oh," he said, "they quit coming." Well, after all, they had been in a school where you pour things into a test tube, where you look at things under a microscope. I said, "Why didn't you take the Gospel of Luke?" "Because," he said, "I wanted to give them the simple Gospel." Well, he didn't. John is not simple; it's profound. It is for believers.

Also there was a seminary professor in this area not long ago who was asked to teach the Bible to a group of businessmen at a noon luncheon. Guess what book he taught. You're right! He said, "They don't know very much, so I'll give them the Gospel of John." I wish he'd given them the Gospel of Mark. That's the Gospel of action, the Gospel of power, the Gospel for the strong man. But he gave them the Gospel of John.

The Gospel of John is for those who already believe. When you come to chapters thirteen through seventeen you can write a sign over it, For Believers Only, and you could put under that, All Others Stay Out. I don't think that section was ever meant for an unbeliever. Jesus took His own into the Upper Room and revealed to them things that enabled them to grow. And no other Gospel writer gives us that. Why? Because they're the evangelists who are presenting Christ as the Savior of the world. Somebody asks, "But doesn't John do that?" Yes, he does, but he is primarily writing for the growth of believers.

John gives more about the resurrected Christ than does any other Gospel writer; in fact, more than all the others put together. Paul said that, though we have known Christ after the flesh, we don't know Him that way anymore. Rather, we know Him as the resurrected Christ. For this reason John attempts to give the appearances of Jesus after His resurrection, and he mentions seven of them.

The first was one of the most dramatic as He appeared to Mary Magdalene there in the garden. The second was to the disciples in the Upper Room, Thomas being absent. The

third appearance was again to the disciples in the Upper Room with Thomas present (these three appearances are recorded in ch. 20). Then we see Him appearing by the Sea of Galilee. Several disciples were out fishing. He called to them from the shore, "Do you have any fish?" (see [John 21:5](#)).

He is going to ask you that some day, and He's going to ask me. Have you been doing any fishing recently? Well, you catch them only the way He tells you. You have to fish by His instructions.

And then He prepared breakfast for them. I wish I had been there for that outdoor breakfast. That was a real cookout. And, friend, He still wants to feed you in the morning -- also during the day and in the evening -- with spiritual food. Then He commissioned Simon Peter: "Simon, do you love Me?" (see [John 21:15-17](#)). Jesus did not say that you have to be a graduate of a seminary to be able to serve Him. He asked, "Do you love Me?" That's the one condition. Don't misunderstand me. If you love Him, you will want training to prepare you for the ministry He has for you, but He wants to know that you love Him. The reason multitudes of folk are not serving Him today is that they do not love Him. And then Peter was told that he was to be a martyr; but John, no, he will live on in order to write this Gospel, three epistles, and the Book of Revelation. There are the seven appearances that John records, and all of them are for believers; they minister to us today.

At the time of the birth of Christ there was a great expectation throughout the heathen world. That was a strange thing.

Suetonius relates that "an ancient and definite expectation had spread throughout the East, that a ruler of the world would, at about that time, arise in Judaea." Tacitus makes a similar statement. Schlegel mentions that Buddhist missionaries traveling to China met Chinese sages going to seek the Messiah about 33 B.C. (Life of Vespasian, c. iv.).

There was an expectation throughout the world at that time that He might come. And it was out of the mysterious East that the wise men came to Jerusalem, "Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? . . ." ([Matt. 2:2](#)).

The marvel is that this Gospel of John, so definitely designed to meet the need of believers, is also designed for the oriental mind as is no other. Whom do I mean by Orientals? The Egyptians, the Babylonians, the Persians, the uncounted millions in India and in China. Even to this good day we know so little about that area of the world. What about Tibet or Outer Mongolia? It is still the mysterious East. We do know this: there is fabulous wealth there, and right next to it is abject poverty. Out of this land of mystery came the wise men. They were bringing gifts -- gold, frankincense, and myrrh for Him. There are a lot of questions to be answered there. Out of that land of mystery they came. That Oriental splendor that we've heard so much about reveals unbelievable wealth, and it is still there -- ornate palaces, gaudy grandeur, priceless gems. It has so entranced the West that, when Columbus started out for this country (we give him credit for discovering America, but he wasn't looking for our continent), he was trying to find a new route to the East in order to bring back something of the wealth that was there.

However, by the side of that wealth there is extreme poverty of the basest sort, dire destitution, millions living in squalor and misery. Their worldly goods consist of the rags they have on their backs. One hundred million will die of starvation in this next decade, we're told. You may ask, "Well, why don't we send food for them?" There's not enough to go around. Our decision is what hundred million will starve? Will it be these or those? But the thing that arrests us is that the poor were crying for help, and the wealthy had found no solution to the problems of life. The Orient gave freest reign to human desires. Although they had this freedom, there was no satisfaction. They've had the great pagan religions -- Buddhism, Shintoism, Hinduism, Confucianism, and Mohammedanism. Yet out of that area, with all that they had, their wise men came asking, ". . . Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him" ([Matt. 2:2](#)). They needed salvation. They had none; no religion ever gave that to them. And this is the reason people in the mysterious East have reveled in the Gospel of John as no others have. It is a mind today that will revel in the Gospel of John. The Lord Jesus can meet the need of this type of mind, as John reveals.

Out of heaven's glory He came, that One who was before any beginning that we can envision. "And the Word was made flesh" and walked down here among men. The Orient had religion. After all, Israel belonged to that area of the world. The Orient had all kinds of religion. They had temples -- ornate, hideous, with degrading rituals. They had cults of the occult. And John tells us that the first public act of the Lord Jesus was to go into the temple of that day and cleanse it. By this He is telling them something, these people who worshiped in their degrading temples, that God is holy. If you're going to worship God you'll have to be cleansed; the temple will have to be cleansed; there can be no compromise with evil or wrong.

A religious ruler came to Jesus one night -- John alone tells us this. Our Lord that night said to this religious ruler, who had everything and was religious to his fingertips, "You must be born again" (see [John 3:3](#)). He needed to have a new life and get rid of the old religion. Jesus said that He had not come to sew a patch on the old garment, but He came to give them the robe of righteousness that would enable them to stand before a holy God. This is what that area of the world needed.

Womanhood was degraded in the Orient. Our Lord ennobled womanhood because He came, born of a woman. He went to a wedding to answer the mockery that they'd made of marriage with the harems of the East. Christ went to a wedding and put His blessing upon it. Also Jesus sat down at a well and had a conversation with a woman of very questionable character. But she was a woman for whom He later died. The soul of a woman was as precious to Him as the soul of a man.

Christ fed the multitudes, followed the meal with a discourse on the Bread of Life, and then escaped because He did not want them to make Him king of their stomachs.

The oriental mind would understand Jesus' discourse on the Bread of Life. It is unfortunate that the managers of our supermarkets don't understand it -- they think it's bread and beans on the shelf that's important, and He said it's not. A man in the Orient who hasn't bread and beans will understand that. I am afraid some of us miss it today.

The Lord Jesus said in this Gospel, "I am the light of the world; I am the bread of life; I am the way, the truth and the life." And the Orient was wretched and perishing in that day, as it is today. John says, "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" ([John 20:30-31](#)). The thing that they needed above everything else was life. And, friend, this is what the whole world needs today -- not religion, but life!

Now before we begin our study of this magnificent Gospel, let me call your attention to some striking features.

The first three Gospels are called the synoptic Gospels because they are written from the same viewpoint with a similar pattern. The fourth Gospel is different.

1. Matthew and Mark emphasize the miracles of Jesus, and Luke gives attention to the parables. John does neither.
2. The miracles in John are given as signs and were chosen with a great deal of discrimination in order to interpret certain great truths. (For example, the discourse on the Bread of Life follows the feeding of the five thousand.) There are eleven specific signs in the Gospel of John.
3. There are no parables in the fourth Gospel. The word parable does occur one time in [John 10:6](#), but it is not the regular Greek word *parabole* but *paroimia*. This word ought not to be translated "parable" at all. The story of the Good Shepherd is not a parable; it is a discourse.

John gives us a chronological order which is well to note. The fact of the matter is, if you will follow it along, it will give you a ladder on which you can fit the three-year ministry of Christ. (For example, in [John 1:29](#), [35](#) he says, "The next day . . . , the next day.") He's giving not only a logical but also a chronological sequence in his Gospel. He also gives attention to places and cities -- for example, "Bethabara beyond Jordan" ([John 1:28](#)); "Cana of Galilee" ([John 2:1](#)).

The deity of Christ is emphasized in this Gospel and is actually in the foreground. But the humanity of Christ is not lost sight of. Do you notice it is only John who tells about His trip through Samaria, and that He sat down at the well, and that He was weary with His journey? Can you think of anything more human than that? Well, I can think of one thing -- Jesus wept. And it is John who tells us that, by the way.

The name Jesus is used almost entirely to the exclusion of Christ in this Gospel. That is strange because the emphasis is upon the deity of Christ, and you'd think that he would use the name Christ. Then why does he use the name Jesus? It is because God became a man.

There is a mighty movement in this Gospel, and it is stated in [John 16:28](#). "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father." God became a man; this is the simple statement of the sublime fact.



## Outline

### **I. Prologue -- Incarnation, [John 1:1-18](#)**

- A. Word Is God, [John 1:1-3](#)
- B. Word Became Flesh, [John 1:14](#)
- C. Word Revealed God, [John 1:18](#)

### **II. Introduction, [John 1:19-51](#)**

- A. Witness of John the Baptist, [John 1:19-36](#)
- B. Witness of Andrew, [John 1:37-42](#)
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### **III. Witness of Works and Words, [John 2](#) through [John 12](#)**

- A. Jesus at Marriage in Cana (First Work), [John 2:1-12](#)
- B. Jesus Cleanses Temple During Passover in Jerusalem (First Word), [John 2:13-22](#)
- C. Jesus Interviews Nicodemus in Jerusalem (Second Word), [John 2:23](#) through [John 3:36](#)
- D. Jesus Interviews Woman at Well in Sychar (Third Word), [John 4:1-45](#)
- E. Jesus Heals Nobleman's Son in Capernaum (Second Word), [John 4:46-54](#)
- F. Jesus Heals Man at Pool of Bethesda (Third Work), [John 5](#)
- G. Jesus Feeds Five Thousand Near Sea of Galilee (Fourth Work and Word), [John 6](#)
- H. Jesus Teaches at Feast of Tabernacles in Temple (Fifth Word), [John 7](#)
- I. Jesus in Temple Forgives Woman Taken in Adultery (Sixth Word), [John 8](#)
- J. Jesus Opens Eyes of Man Born Blind in Jerusalem (Fifth Work), [John 9](#)
  - 1. Record of Miracle, [John 9:1-7](#)
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- K. Jesus Is the Good Shepherd (Seventh Word), [John 10](#)
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- L. Jesus Raises Lazarus from Dead in Bethany (Sixth Work), [John 11](#)
- M. Witness of Jew and Gentile to Jesus, [John 12](#)
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### **IV. Witness of Jesus to His Witnesses, Upper Room Discourse, [John 13](#) through [John 17](#)**

- A. Jesus Washes Feet of Disciples, [John 13](#)
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- E. The Lord's Prayer, [John 17](#)

- 1. Jesus Prays for Himself, [John 17:1-5](#)
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## **V. Witness to World, [John 18](#) -- [John 20](#)**

- A. Arrest and Trial of Jesus, [John 18](#)
  - 1. Arrest in Gethsemane; Trial before Annas, [John 18:1-14](#)
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  - 5. Trial before Pilate, [John 18:28-40](#)
- B. Death of Jesus at Golgotha; Burial in Tomb of Joseph, [John 19](#)
- C. Resurrection of Jesus; Appearances to Mary, Disciples, Thomas, [John 20](#)

## **VI. Epilogue -- Glorification, [John 21](#)**

The Resurrected Jesus Is Still God  
 Lord of Our Wills -- Directs Our Service (John 22:6)  
 Lord of Our Hearts -- Motive for Service (John 22:15-17)  
 Lord of Our Minds -- Lack of Knowledge No Excuse from Service (John 22:22)

Another division of the Gospel of John:

LIGHT -- [John 1](#) -- [John 12](#)  
 LOVE -- [John 13](#) -- [John 17](#)  
 LIFE -- [John 18](#) -- [John 21](#)

## **Chapter 1**

**THEME:** Prologue -- Incarnation; Word is God, Word became flesh, Word revealed God; witness of John the Baptist; witness of Andrew; witness of Philip; witness of Nathanael

## **Word Is God -- Word Became Flesh -- Word Revealed God (1:1-12)**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God [[John 1:1](#)].

The Gospel of John introduces the Lord Jesus Christ with three tremendous statements:

"In the beginning was the Word,"  
 "And the Word was with God,"  
 "And the Word was God."



"The Word" is one of the highest and most profound titles of the Lord Jesus Christ. To determine the exact meaning is not easy. Obviously the Lord Jesus Christ is not the logos of Greek philosophy; rather He is the memra of the Hebrew Scriptures. Notice how important the Word is in the Old Testament. For instance, the name for Jehovah was never pronounced. It was such a holy word that they never used it at all. But this is the One who is the Word and, gathering up everything that was said of Him in the Old Testament, He is now presented as the One "In the beginning." This beginning antedates the very first words in the Bible, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." That beginning can be dated, although I do not believe that anyone can date it accurately -- it is nonsense to say that it is 4004 B.C., as Ussher's dating has it. It probably goes back billions and billions of years. You see, you and I are dealing with the God of eternity. When you go back to creation, He is already there, and that is exactly the way this is used -- "in the beginning was the Word." Notice it is not is the Word; it was not in the beginning that the Word started out or was begotten. Was (as Dr. Lenske points out) is known as a durative imperfect, meaning continued action. It means that the Word was in the beginning. What beginning? Just as far back as you want to go. The Bible says, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" ([Gen. 1:1](#)). Does that begin God? No, just keep on going back billions and trillions and "squillions" of years. I can think back to billions of years back of creation -- maybe you can go beyond that -- but let's put down a point there, billions of years back of creation. He already was; He comes out of eternity to meet us. He did not begin. "In the beginning was the Word" -- He was already there when the beginning was. "Well," somebody says, "there has to be a beginning somewhere." All right, wherever you begin, He is there to meet you, He is already past tense. "In the beginning was the Word" -- five words in the original language, and there is not a man on top of this earth who can put a date on it or understand it or fathom it. This first tremendous statement starts us off in space, you see.

The second statement is this, "and the Word was with God." This makes it abundantly clear that He is separate and distinct from God the Father. You cannot identify Him as God the Father because He is with God. "But," someone says, "if He is with God, He is not God." The third statement sets us straight, "and the Word was God." This is a clear, emphatic declaration that the Lord Jesus Christ is God. In fact, the Greek is more specific than this, because in the Greek language the important word is placed at the beginning of the sentence and it reads, "God was the Word." That is emphatic; you cannot get it more emphatic than that. Do you want to get rid of the deity of Christ? My friend, you cannot get rid of it. The first three statements in John's Gospel tie the thing down. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

Let's move on down to [verse 14](#) and notice the three statements there.

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth [[John 1:14](#)].

"And the Word was made flesh,"

"And the Word dwelt among us,"

"He was full of grace and truth."

The Greek philosopher probably would have stayed with us through verse one, but he leaves us here. He would never agree that the Word was made flesh. The Greek language allows us to put it more specifically and, I think, more accurately: "The Word was born flesh." Turn this over in your mind for a moment. Here comes God out of eternity, already the Ancient of Days; but He also came to Bethlehem, a little baby thing that made a woman cry. And notice that John's Gospel does not even mention His birth in Bethlehem. Do you know why? He is talking about One who is too big for Bethlehem. Out of eternity, the Word became flesh.

"And [the Word] dwelt among us" is the second statement in [verse 14](#). "Dwelt" is from skenoo; it means "He pitched His tent among us." Our human bodies are merely little tents in which we live. The apostle Paul used the same imagery: ". . . we know that if . . . this tabernacle were dissolved . . ." ([2Cor. 5:1](#)). This house in which we live is a tabernacle, a tent, that can be blown over in a night; it can be snuffed out in an instant. Because you and I live in these little tents, the God of eternity took upon Himself a human body and thus pitched His tent down here among us. Such is the second tremendous statement.

Notice the third, "(and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." Now John is saying something else. The question I would naturally ask at this point is, "If He was made flesh, He certainly limited himself." John says, "Wait a minute -- He was full of grace and truth." The word "full" means that you just could not have any more. He brought all the deity with Him, and He was full of grace and full of truth when He came down here.

Now we move to [verse 18](#) to find three statements again.

No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him [[John 1:18](#)].

"No man hath seen God at any time;"  
"The only begotten Son, which  
is in the bosom of the Father,"  
"He hath declared him."

Notice the first: "No man hath seen God at any time." Why? He will explain it in this Gospel; the Lord Jesus will tell the woman at the well, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" ([John 4:24](#)) -- for God is spirit. No man has seen God at any time. What about the appearances in the Old Testament? God never revealed Himself in the Old Testament to the eyes of man. What, then, did they see? Well, go back and read the record. For instance, Jacob said that he saw God, but what he saw was the angel of the Lord who wrestled with him. That was a manifestation, but he did not see God because God is a spirit. "No man hath seen God at any time."

The second statement is, "the only begotten Son." The best Greek text is that of Nestle, the German scholar. He has come to the definite conclusion that it is not the only begotten Son, but the only begotten God. I prefer that also. "Which is in the bosom of the Father" tells us a great deal. He did not come from the head of God to reveal the wisdom of God; He did not come from the foot of God to be a servant of man. (Have you ever noticed that although we speak of the fact He was a servant, whose shoes did He ever

shine? Did He ever run an errand for anybody? He did not. He said, "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" ([John 6:38](#)). He was God's servant -- He came to serve Him, and as He served the Father, He served men.) He did not come from the feet; He did not come from the head; it was from the bosom of the Father that He came. He came to reveal the heart of God: He was "the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father."

The third statement completes verse eighteen: "he hath declared him." The Greek word here is *exegesato*. *Ago* is "to lead" and *ex* is "out." It means that what Jesus Christ did was to lead God out into the open. Do you know anything bigger than that? A little trip to the moon is nothing in comparison. Here He comes out of eternity past, the God of this universe, the Creator of everything, taking upon Himself human flesh, and bringing God out into the open so that men can know Him. My friend, the only way in the world you can know God is through this One, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ came to reveal God because He is God.

I am not through with these statements; there is something else here. Let's put together the first verse in each of these three groups and see what we come up with:

"In the beginning was the Word," "And the Word was made flesh," "No man hath seen God at any time."

You could not see God -- God is spirit. He had to become flesh; He had to become one of us in order for us to know Him. We could not go up there to understand Him; He had to come down here and bring God down where we are.

Now let's put the second statements together from each of the three groups:

"The Word was with God," "And dwelt among us," "The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father."

Consider this One for a moment -- the angels bowed before Him, He was with God, on an equality with God. The apostle Paul wrote of Him, He ". . . thought it not robbery to be equal with God" ([Phil. 2:6](#)). That is, He did not go to school to become God; it was not something He worked overtime to attain. It was not a degree that He earned. He did not try to be God; He was God. I do not mean to be irreverent, but He did not say to the Father when He came to this earth, "Keep your eye on Gabriel; he is after My job; watch him while I'm gone." He did not have to do that -- nobody could take His place. He was God. Here He comes: born in Bethlehem, a few little shepherds there, not many; He goes up to Nazareth, thirty years hidden away in Nazareth. God, out of eternity coming down and going to Nazareth, working in a carpenter shop. Why? So you can know God. The only way you will ever know Him, my friend, is to know this One. "The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father" is the only One who can reveal God to us.

Now notice the third statement in each group:

"The Word was God," "And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth," "He hath declared him."

When He was down here, He was still God, full of grace and truth. And He declared Him; He is the only one who can lead Him out in the open where we can get acquainted with Him.

We are not through with this. I want you to see something else. How do you divide up this universe? I sat with a man who designed the shield that has been on all these space crafts to make their re-entry. He is a scientist who is an authority on heat. As we had lunch together in New Jersey, he said, "You know, this universe is made up of just three things. I believe that God has put His fingerprints on everything -- the Trinity is everywhere." Then he explained what he meant. The universe is divided up into time, space, and matter. Can you think of a fourth? The very interesting thing is that time, space, and matter include everything that is in this universe as you and I know it. Then time can be divided into just three parts: past, present, and future. Can you think of a fourth? And what about space? Length, breadth, and height. Is there another direction? Also there is in matter energy, motion, and phenomena. Those are the three divisions of the three divisions. The universe in which we live bears the mark of the Trinity.

Now notice the way in which the Incarnation is geared into this observation. [Verse 1](#):

**Time:** "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God."

**Space:** "The Word was made flesh" -- became flesh, came down into space. Where? To Bethlehem, a little geographical spot -- and even this earth was a pretty small spot for Him to come to -- and He pitched His tent here among us. We beheld His glory, full of grace and truth.

**Matter:** "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." Because He became matter, became a man, took upon Himself humanity, men could see and know God. This is the time, space, and matter of the Incarnation. Let's divide each of these into three.

**Past:** "In the beginning was the Word."

**Present:** "The Word was made [became] flesh" (in our day).

**Future:** "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son . . . hath declared him." The apostle Paul, at the end of his life, said, "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection . . ." ([Phil. 3:10](#)). That will be for the future -- to really know Him; today we actually know so little because we are finite.

Then look at space, divided into length, breadth and height.

**Length:** "In the beginning was the Word."

**Breadth:** He came down to this earth and was made flesh.

**Height:** No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father -- He has come from the heights to set Him before us.

Consider the divisions of matter: energy, motion, and phenomena.

**Energy:** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God -- that's energy. How did this universe come into existence? God spoke. Every rational person has to confront this problem of how this universe began. That is the reason evolution

has been popular -- it offers to the natural man an explanation for the origin of the universe. You must have an explanation for it if you do any thinking at all. Where did it come from? Well, here is the answer: "In the beginning was the Word." God spoke. That is the first thing that happened. When God speaks, when the Word speaks, energy is translated into matter. What is atomic fission? It is matter translated back into energy -- poof! it disappears. Creation began with energy. In the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God. The Word was God.

**Motion:** The Word was made flesh. He came out of heaven's glory and He came to this earth.

**Phenomena:** The greatest phenomenon in this world is Jesus Christ. The wonders of the ancient world, the wonders to see in our day are nothing in comparison to the wonder of the Incarnation -- God became man!

These statements are bigger than any of us, and yet they are so simple. We have read them, probably memorized them, yet no man can plumb the depths of them. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. . . . No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" ([John 1:1, 14, 18](#)).

These three verses are the great building blocks; now let us consider some of the cement that holds them together.

And things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made [[John 1:3](#)].

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Creator. Not only did He exist before Bethlehem, but He created the vast universe including the material out of which man constructed Bethlehem. All things were made by Him; He is the instrument of creation. Nothing came into existence without Him.

In him was life; and the life was the light of men [[John 1:4](#)].

Now we are confronted with something else -- two of the simplest things in the world: light and life. Zoe and phos are the two words in the original language. From zoe we get zoology, the study of life; and from phos we get photo or anything that is built on it, such as photograph -- it is light. These two things are so common that we take them for granted. Life -- we see it everywhere. There may be a great deal of life right where you are at this moment. You go out in the woods and you see the same thing -- life. It greets you on every hand, but can you explain it? You see in the Sunday pictorials and the sensational magazines that men now have discovered the source of life. But if you read them, you find that they have not found the source at all, though they think they are close to it. They put the microscope down on a green leaf. One moment they see that a little cell is arranged one way and is dead as a doornail. The next moment the thing is rearranged in another way, and it is alive. And then the thing starts growing and doubling, dividing and multiplying itself. Why does it do that? Life.

The other common thing is light. What is light? I listened to Irwin Moon try to explain it (and Irwin gave the best explanation I have heard), but when he got through, I was not sure if light is a real something or if it is just waves because they can cut the thing off and still light will go through. As you know, certain kinds of light will go through objects that would stop waves. What in the world is light?

You see, we are dealing with things that are fundamental, though men today with all their scientific gadgets know so little about them.

"In him was life" -- all life is in Jesus Christ. "In him was life; and the life was the light of men." You and I live in a universe that is spiritually dark. The fact of the matter is, it is physically dark to a certain degree. But God said, ". . . Let there be light . . ." ([Gen. 1:3](#)) and these light holders are placed about throughout His universe like street lights in a big city. We are told that when a man gets away from this earth a short distance, he is in total, absolute darkness, and it is frightening to be out where there is nothing from which the sun can be reflected. Our little globe is out in a dark universe, yet that is nothing compared to the spiritual darkness that envelops it. When the sun disappears, there is physical darkness over the land; but twenty-four hours a day there is spiritual darkness here, awful spiritual darkness. Man does not know God; man is in rebellion against God; man is in sin that blinds him to God. In the Lord Jesus Christ there is life, and the life that He gives is the light of men. In fact, His life is the only thing that can kindle light in the heart of an individual. An unregenerate man has no spiritual life within him. This is the reason that when you present to him Jesus Christ, he says, "I don't get it. I don't understand that at all."

I used to go down to the jail in Cleburne, Texas, and speak to the men. It was not a large jail and I could talk to them in a conversational tone. I would start off talking about football (because in Texas football is a religion!), and those hardened men would get enthusiastic about it. I talked also of other things and they were interested. Then I would turn the conversation to something spiritual, and I could see the darkness come over their faces. I might just as well have been talking to corpses. And that is what they were -- men dead in trespasses and sins. This world today is in spiritual darkness, and the Lord Jesus Christ has brought the only light there is in the world. He is the light. "In him was life; and the life was the light of men."

[And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not \[John 1:5\].](#)

That word "comprehend" is an unfortunate translation. And a wiseacre did not help it by rendering it, "and the darkness was not able to put it out." That is no translation at all. The word in the Greek is *katelaben*, meaning actually "to take down." It is the picture of a secretary to whom the boss is giving dictation, and she stops and says, "I can't take that down. I am not able to take it down." The light shines in darkness and the darkness is not able to take it in. That is it exactly. Someone said to him, "Boy, was I in darkness before I received Christ! And I don't know why I didn't see." Well, that is it: you were in darkness and you did not see. The darkness just cannot take it in.

Now this is something quite interesting, and it is not true of physical light. You go into a dark room, and the minute you switch on the light, the darkness leaves, it disappears.



Darkness and light cannot exist together physically. The moment you bring light in, darkness is gone. The minute light is taken out, darkness will come right back in. But spiritual light and darkness exist together. Sometimes there is a husband who is saved and a wife who is unsaved -- or vice versa. Here is a believer working next to another man who says, "What do you mean when you talk about being a Christian? I do the best I can. Am I not a Christian?" There you have light and darkness side by side and the darkness just cannot take it in. That is exactly what is said here, "The light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not."

He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not [[John 1:10](#)].

That was the tragedy -- the world was in darkness, spiritual darkness, and did not know Him. Even today we are seeing the rise of atheism and unbelief, and we will see it more and more in the days that lie ahead. A great many people do not seem to recognize that unbelief and atheism go naturally with the natural man. Somebody says to me, "Oh, did you read in the paper what Dr. So-and-So of a certain seminary wrote?" Yes, I read it. "Well, isn't it awful?" No, I do not think so. He would upset my apple cart if he said that he believed the Bible because he is an unbeliever by his own statement. He says that he does not believe in being born again, that he does not believe he has to receive Christ in order to be saved. Now I do not expect that man to say he believes the Bible. That would be absolutely contrary to his statements. The so-called theologians and theological professors who espouse the "God is dead movement" present us with the preposterous, untenable claim that they are Christian atheists! Obviously atheism precludes the possibility of being Christian, yet unbelief has moved into our seminaries and pulpits across the land. The world does not know Him.

He came unto his own [his own things], and his own [people] received him not [[John 1:11](#)].

He came into His own universe but His own people did not receive Him.

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name [[John 1:12](#)].

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power." The word power is not dunamis power like dynamite, physical power, but exousian power which is delegated power, authority. "But as many as received him, to them gave he the authority to become the sons of God [children, tekna of God], even to them that believe on his name."

Notice that this is for "them that believe on his name." And always with the word "believe" there is a preposition. You see, faith, as the Bible uses it, is not just head knowledge. Many people ask, "You mean all that I have to do is to say I believe?" Yes, that is all you have to do, but let's see what that implies. With the verb "to believe" there is always a preposition -- sometimes en (in), sometimes eis (into), or sometimes epi (upon). You must believe into, in, or upon Jesus Christ. Let me illustrate with a chair. I am standing beside a chair and I believe it will hold me up, but it is not holding me up. Why? Because I have only a head knowledge. I just say, "Yes, it will hold me up." Now suppose I believe into the chair by sitting in it. See what I mean? I am committing my

entire weight to it and it is holding me up. Is Christ holding you up? Is He your Savior? It is not a question of standing to the side and saying, "Oh, yes, I believe Jesus is the Son of God." The question is have you trusted Him, have you believed into Him, are you resting in Him? This chair is holding me up completely. And at this moment Christ is my complete Savior. I am depending on Him; I am resting in Him.

### **Witness Of John The Baptist (1:19-36)**

And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? [[John 1:19](#)].

This is the first incident in the life of John the Baptist which John gives us in his Gospel record. He does not give us the story of the beginning of this man. We find out about his birth in the Gospel of Luke, but here the record of John the Baptist begins when a delegation from Jerusalem comes to question him. They come out to ask him, "Who art thou?"

In this question there is a subtle temptation because this offered John an opportunity to make something of himself. In [John 3:30](#) we find his response when his disciples wanted him to make something of himself. He said, "He must increase, but I must decrease." What a statement that is! That is a statement that every believer should make. But every believer should live it too. "He must increase, but I must decrease." Friend, both can't be on top. Either Christ is primary in your life and occupies first place, or you (that is, the selfish "I") will be on top. You can't have both. He must increase and I must decrease, or else it will be the other way around.

Now note the answer that he gives to the religious rulers:

And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ [[John 1:20](#)].

You see, they cleverly suggest that he might be the Messiah -- they have a messianic hope. But he makes it very clear that he is not the Christ; he is not the Messiah. They are looking to the wrong man. So, if he is not the Christ, what great person is he?

And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No [[John 1:21](#)].

You notice how brief and matter-of-fact John is here. His answers are terse, and they get briefer as the religious rulers continue to question him. If he's not the Christ, he must be Elijah. If he's not Elijah, he must be "that prophet." They are referring to a prophet "like unto Moses" who had been promised back in [Deuteronomy 18:15](#). John gives an emphatic "No!" He is not the predicted prophet of Deuteronomy.

Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? [[John 1:22](#)].

They insist that he must tell them who he is. They can't take back a report of just a string of negatives. So John does identify himself.

He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias [[John 1:23](#)].

Notice that he is a voice. You see, Christ is the Word! John is the voice! A voice is all John wants to be. He has a grand message to give, a message much greater than he is. Frankly, we should be satisfied to be only a voice because certainly the message we have to give is greater than the individual. And that voice should, of course, declare the glories of Christ.

Notice the grand message that he gives, "Make straight the way of the Lord." In other words, "Get ready for the coming of the Lord." I take it that he means the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. It was at hand in the person of the King, you see. And he tells them to "Make straight the way." This would be the same as telling them to get the crooked things out of their lives, to deal with the things that are wrong. This we need to do also. When we do that, there is opened for us fellowship with God. "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth" ([1John 1:6](#)). We need to get our lives straight, and we can get them straight by confession, as we are taught in [1John 1:8-9](#).

You will notice that he says he is quoting the prophet Isaiah. ". . . Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God" ([Isa. 40:3](#)).

And they which were sent were of the Pharisees.

And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? [[John 1:24-25](#)].

They are now presenting him with a technical point. "If you are none of these, then why do you baptize?"

John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not;

He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose [[John 1:26-27](#)].

Today, we call this man John the Baptist. But he said that he merely used water. There was One coming after him who would baptize with fire and with the Holy Spirit. That fire is the baptism of judgment which is to come upon the earth. The baptism of the Holy Spirit took place at Pentecost. One wonders whether Christ was in the crowd that day. We don't know. But He might have been.

"He . . . coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose." A servant must do every task of his master. A disciple, however, must do every task except take the thong out of the teacher's shoes. That was the rule of that day. John is saying that he is a servant. He is not even a disciple; he is merely a servant. And he is not even worthy to be that servant, although that is what he is.

These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing [[John 1:28](#)].

I called attention in the Introduction to the fact that the apostle John gears us into the geography and to the calendar. Here we have a geographical location given to us. And then notice that the following verse begins, "The next day." John is showing to us that the One who came from out of eternity, the Word made flesh, is now geared into geography and into our calendar down here.

The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world [[John 1:29](#)].

John marks Him out here. He is the Savior. He is not only the Messiah; He is also the Savior. He is a very great Savior for He is the Lamb of God. He is the complete Savior because He takes away sin. He is the almighty Savior because He takes away the sin of the world. He is the perpetual Savior because He "taketh" away -- present tense. Anyone can come to Him at any time.

Here we find the fulfillment of the answer that Abraham had given to Isaac those many years ago. Isaac had said, ". . . Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering . . ." ([Gen. 22:7-8](#)). John tells us that Jesus is the Lamb.

This proves that Cain was wrong and Abel was right. Abel brought a little lamb. All the lambs that were slain on Jewish altars down through the ages now find their fulfillment in Him. John marks Him out. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me.

And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water [[John 1:30-31](#)].

John is saying that Jesus is the real Baptizer. We might call Him Jesus the Baptizer. He is the One who will baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him.

And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.

And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples;

And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! [[John 1:32-36](#)].

Before it was the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. That is the work of Christ. Now it is "Behold the Lamb of God!" He is the Lamb in His person. We see that

John baptized Jesus and that Jesus was identified by the Holy Spirit. So, looking upon Jesus as He walked, John says, "Behold the Lamb of God!"

### **Witness Of Andrew (1:37-42)**

And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou?

He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour [[John 1:37-39](#)].

He extends the same invitation to you today, "Come and see." Taste of the Lord and see whether or not He is good (see [Ps. 34:8](#)).

Notice again how specifically John gears this into time -- it was late in the evening.

One of these two who had been disciples of John the Baptist was Andrew, and the very first thing that he does is to go after his own brother, Simon.

One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.

And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone [[John 1:40-42](#)].

This man, Simon, was as weak as water. Our Lord told him that he would be a stone man. I think everybody laughed there that day because nobody believed he could become the rock man, the man who would stand up on the Day of Pentecost and give the first sermon, which would be used to sweep three thousand persons into the church (see [Acts 2:40-41](#)).

### **Witness Of Philip (1:43-46)**

The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.

Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter [[John 1:43-44](#)].

Again we are dealing with geography. Bethsaida is up on the Sea of Galilee. We know that Peter and Andrew and Philip lived up there. They were fishermen.

Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see [[John 1:45-46](#)].

## **Witness Of Nathanael (1:47-51)**

This Nathanael is a wiseacre, and he makes a wisecrack here. Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? And I think he laughed at his own joke, by the way. But Philip didn't laugh. He just said, "Come and see." That is the really important thing -- come and see.

Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! [[John 1:47](#)].

Here is an Israelite in whom there is no Jacob. You see, although this man is a wisecracker, he is not deceitful or cunning. There is nothing of the old Jacob in him. He is an Israelite in whom there is no Jacob.

Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.

Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel [[John 1:48-49](#)].

The Lord Jesus had two doubters among His apostles. The one at the beginning was Nathanael; the one at the end was Thomas. This man, this skeptic, this one who wonders whether any good can come out of Nazareth, confesses before the interview is over that Jesus is the Son of God, the King of Israel.

When Nathanael confessed that the Lord Jesus is the Son of God and the King of Israel, it reveals that something very important did come out of Nazareth.

Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these [[John 1:50](#)].

The Lord more or less rebuked him and asked whether it was just because He saw him under the fig tree that he believed. Jesus promises him that he will see greater things. Indeed during the next three years, Nathanael did see much greater things than these.

And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man [[John 1:51](#)].

Our Lord had said to this man, "Behold, an Israelite in whom there is no Jacob." Now He follows up on this by referring to the incident in the life of the patriarch Jacob when, as a young man, he had run away from home. In fact, he had to leave home because his brother Esau was after him to murder him. His first night away from home was at Bethel, and there the Lord appeared to him. A ladder was let down from heaven, and on that ladder the angels were ascending and descending. The meaning for Jacob was that God had not lost contact with him. He had thought that when he left home, he had left God back there. He had a limited view of God, of course. At Bethel he learned that God would be with him.



Our Lord picks that up here and says that the ladder was Himself. You'll see now the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man. The angels ministered to Him, and the angels were subject to Him. Here He was given charge over the angels. He could send them as messengers to heaven, and they would return also. So Jesus says that Nathanael will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man. He is going to see that the Father from the top of that ladder will speak of this One, saying, ". . . This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" ([Matt. 3:17](#)).

The ladder is Christ, and only by Him can you and I make contact with God. The Lord Jesus said, ". . . I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" ([John 14:6](#)). He is the ladder -- not one that you climb, but One that you trust, One that you rest upon and believe in. That is the important thing to see here.

This first chapter of John's Gospel has been lengthy and extremely important. The prologue presents the incarnation of the Word -- He is God, He became flesh, He reveals the Father. Then He is introduced by witnesses. John the Baptist testifies that Jesus is the revealer of God. Andrew testifies that Jesus is the Messiah. Philip testifies that Jesus fulfills the Old Testament. Nathanael witnesses that Jesus is the Son of God, the King of Israel.

## Chapter 2

**THEME:** Jesus at marriage in Cana (first work); Jesus cleanses temple during Passover in Jerusalem (first word); Jesus interviews Nicodemus in Jerusalem (second word)

### **Jesus At Marriage In Cana (first Work) (2:1-12)**

The important incident in this chapter is when Jesus, invited to the marriage in Cana, performed His first miracle. We are told in the eleventh verse, "This beginning of miracles did Jesus." This, then, is the answer to those who teach that the Lord Jesus, as a little boy down in Egypt making clay pigeons with the other little boys, would touch the clay pigeons and they would fly away. That makes a pretty good story, but there is no fact in it. This record makes it very clear that He did not perform miracles in Egypt, but that His first miracle was at Cana of Galilee.

The wonder of all this is that here is the One who is in the beginning with God and is God. He came out of eternity. He was made flesh and for his first thirty years lived in Nazareth of Galilee. Then He walks over a hill to attend a wedding in Cana.

Notice that again John gears this in with time and space. "And the third day." Our Lord is now going out into His ministry.

And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there:

And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage [[John 2:1-2](#)].

Many Bible teachers believe that she was there because she was related to the individuals who were getting married, or at least to one of the families. This is largely a supposition, but it could well be true. The Lord Jesus and His disciples were also invited.

The time is given here as the third day. It is thought that this was probably late February or early March in the year B.C. 27. The very interesting thing is that John carefully gives the places. In the previous chapter we were back in Bethsaida, and now the scene shifts to Cana of Galilee. Then it will move to Capernaum in [verse 12](#) and to Jerusalem in [verse 13](#). John gives us the chronological sequence and the geography.

It says that "the mother of Jesus" was there. She is never called Mary in the Gospel of John. She comes to Jesus with a very unusual request. Notice what she says to Him.

And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him,  
They have no wine [[John 2:3](#)].

The question comes up about the wine. I read recently of a liberal who called Jesus a bootlegger. Such sacrilege! In that day, wine was a staple article of diet. However, drunkenness was absolutely condemned. There was no thought of drunkenness connected with this. A wedding was a religious occasion, by the way, and these were folk who believed the Old Testament. You can put it down that there was no intoxication at this wedding.

The wedding is a picture of another wedding that is coming. Christ began His ministry on this earth at a wedding. He will conclude it, as far as the church is concerned, with a wedding. At the marriage supper of the Lamb the church will be presented to Him as a bride.

This is the first miracle which He performed. Moses' first miracle was turning water into blood. Christ's first miracle was turning water into wine. The Law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. What a contrast!

What did Mary mean by her statement? First of all, it is well to call attention to the fact that this was a very poor family. They simply didn't have enough refreshments. Bengel in his commentary said that, when she told the Lord there was no wine, it was a gentle hint for Him and His disciples to depart. Calvin writes that it was a suggestion for Him to occupy the minds of the guests with a discourse. It would be just like John Calvin to suggest that, by the way. If you have ever read Calvin's Institutes, you know they are profound, but boring. If Calvin had been there, he would have given them a discourse and probably put them all to sleep! However, I do not think that the context here would permit either interpretation. I don't believe it was a hint for Him to leave nor a suggestion to occupy the minds of the guests. I think that very candidly she is saying, "Perform a miracle. This would be an appropriate occasion."

You will recall that when the angel Gabriel appeared to her and told her that she was the one who was to bring forth the Messiah, Mary raised the question about the virgin birth, "... How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" ([Luke 1:34](#)). Gabriel made it very clear that the Holy Spirit would come upon her and that which was conceived in her was holy. She showed her faith and submission when she said, "... Behold the handmaid of the Lord . . ." ([Luke 1:38](#)). From that moment, and during the intervening years, there was

always a question about her virginity. People actually raised questions about Jesus. She is really saying, "Here is Your opportunity to perform a miracle and demonstrate that I am accurate when I said that You were virgin born and that You are the One whom I have claimed You are." Jesus gives her a very clear answer.

Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come [[John 2:4](#)].

His implication is, "This is not the occasion. I'll clear your name, but not here."

When He was hanging on the cross and the mother of Jesus was standing beneath that cross, you remember that He looked down and said to her, "Woman, behold thy son!" ([John 19:26](#)). At that time His hour had come. In three days He would come back from the dead. When the disciples met in an upper room after His resurrection and ascension, Mary could look around, for she was there, and she could say to each of those disciples, "I told you that He was the Son of God!" Paul says that He is ". . . declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" ([Rom. 1:4](#)).

Here she is asking Him to do something that will demonstrate who He is to clear her name. He tells her that He is going to do just that -- He will clear her name -- but that the hour has not yet come. That hour did come! His resurrection proves who He is. And don't forget that the Resurrection proves the virgin birth of Christ. We tend to look at the virgin birth at Christmastime as an isolated fact. It is connected with His resurrection, friend, because He is who He claimed to be.

His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it [[John 2:5](#)].

What good advice! I've always wanted to preach a Mother's Day sermon on this text, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it." My subject would be "A Mother's Advice." I never got around to it as a pastor, but it is good advice.

And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.

Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim [[John 2:6-7](#)].

Our attention is now drawn to these six water pots. They were used in ceremonial cleansing. Because this was a poor family, the pots were evidently beaten and battered and probably had been pushed in the back somewhere. They hoped when the wedding guests came that no one would notice them. I think our Lord must have embarrassed the family when He asked for those pots to be brought out. Then He tells them the exact procedure to follow, and they filled them to the brim.

And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it.

When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom,

And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now [[John 2:8-10](#)].

We don't want to get diverted here by arguing whether this wine was intoxicating or not. Very candidly, that is not the issue here at all. If you think you can make something out of this, you're entirely wrong.

Notice there is something omitted here. Where is the bride? I don't find her anywhere. And what did the bride wear? That's the most important part of our weddings. Now I've officiated at many weddings, hundreds of weddings during my ministry, and I've seen many brides come down the aisle. I've learned in the course of time that when I come in at the beginning, nobody is particularly interested in the preacher. Then the bridegroom comes in, and, very candidly, not many are interested in him. The only one who smiles at him is his mother. Then the bride comes down the aisle, and everybody looks. Now what did this bride at Cana wear? We don't know. Why? Because Jesus and those empty water pots are the important things here.

Friend, here is something wonderful. He took empty water pots and He had them filled with water. Then as they ladled out the water, I think the miracle took place. When they took the water and served it to the guests, it became wine.

This holds a great spiritual lesson for you and me. Jesus uses us as water pots today. We're just beaten and battered water pots. We're not attractive and ought to be pushed to the side and covered up. But He wants to use us. He wants to fill us with water. What is the water? The water is the Word of God, friend. He wants to fill you and me with the water of the Word of God. Then, after He fills us with the water of the Word of God, He wants us to ladle it out. When we ladle it out -- I don't know how to explain it -- but when the water leaves the water pots and gets to those for whom it is destined, it becomes wine. It becomes the wine of joy through the working of the Holy Spirit. We are told, "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit" ([Eph. 5:18](#)). The Holy Spirit takes that water and performs a miracle in the life of an individual. Although I cannot explain it, I often see it take place. I have right here on my desk a dozen letters that have come in recently from people who have been saved by just hearing the Word of God through my radio program. Now, I don't understand it. I'm just an old water pot, and I've got a little of the water of the Word inside me. As I ladle it out, it becomes the wine of joy to folk who receive it.

Years ago when I was speaking to the Hollywood Christian group, there was a couple there who had been saved out of a night club. They said they were going to use their talent for Jesus. Well, I didn't like that. I asked them afterward what kind of a talent they used in a night club that Jesus could use. They stumbled around with an answer; so I said, "Look, when you and I came to Jesus, He didn't get anything but sinners. He got old battered water pots." So I told them about these water pots at Cana. I told them Jesus wanted to fill their lives with the Word of God, the water, and then wanted to ladle it out. I said that when the Holy Spirit ladled it out, it would become the wine of joy in their own lives and would bring a new desire and the joy of life into the life of any believer who would trust Him. They accepted that advice, and we remained good friends. Several

years ago I met them on a street in Chicago. We saw each other coming. When they got within earshot, he said to me, "Here come a couple of old beaten up water pots." I want to say this: God has used them but not with the talent that was used in the night club. He filled them with the water of the Word of Life.

Friend, this is the great message that is here for you and me. He wants to fill us with the Word of God and then ladle it out.

After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples: and they continued there not many days [[John 2:12](#)].

This is probably referring to that time when His hometown would not accept Him. When He went into the synagogue and read from Isaiah, they said, ". . . Is not this Joseph's son?" ([Luke 4:22](#)). They probably would have destroyed Him at that time. So he moved His headquarters to Capernaum, and, as far as I can tell, that continued to be His headquarters during His ministry of three years.

### **Jesus Cleanses The Temple During Passover In Jerusalem (first Word) (2:13-22)**

And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem [[John 2:13](#)].

Here we have another geographical point. He started out at Cana of Galilee, went to Capernaum, and is now in Jerusalem.

Notice that John labels this feast the "Jews' passover." It is no longer the ". . . LORD'S passover . . ." ([Exod. 12:27](#)). It is the Jews' passover -- merely a religious feast, quite meaningless, just a ritual to go through. The One of whom the Passover speaks has now come. ". . . For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" ([1Cor. 5:7](#)).

Our Lord went up to Jerusalem. This was not at the beginning of His public ministry but probably at the end of the first year. All males were required to go to Jerusalem three times a year, at the time of the Feast of Passover, at the Feast of Pentecost, and at the Feast of Tabernacles. He went up for the Passover which was about April the fourteenth. So you see that John gears this into the geography and into the calendar.

Now we find that He cleanses the temple. He did this twice. One cleansing was at the beginning of His ministry and one again at the end of His ministry.

And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting [[John 2:14](#)].

They were selling animals and selling doves and changing money. It is quite interesting that they would not accept any kind of money except the temple money there; no other kind could be used or offered. So they had an exchange place, and they made a good profit by making the exchange of coins. When I came back from Venezuela some time ago, I came back with some Venezuelan money that I wanted to get rid of because I couldn't spend it here. There was an exchange place in the airport, and I went up there and told them that I wanted to change it for American money. Believe me, friend, I didn't get as much as when I made the trade the other way around; that is, exchanging American

money for the Venezuelan money. Now that is the way they did here at the temple, you see.

Why did they have such a system? Why did they do this? Because they were making religion easy. They would take the Roman coinage, which had an effigy of Caesar and the imprint of paganism on it, and they would exchange that for Jewish coinage which could be used in the temple. So they were there for the convenience of the worshipers. Also, they changed large coins into smaller ones. Not only did they make religion easy, but they also made religion cheap. I recognize that we ought not to overemphasize money in the church and should not beg, but I'll tell you something that is more intolerable than that. Some people treat the church and the cause of Christ as something so cheap that at times it becomes necessary to sound an alarm.

They were also selling animals. There was a lot of traffic in those sacrificial animals. It was work and expense to raise those sheep and oxen, and somebody would have to do it for a price. It was very easy for all this to become a religious racket. Today we have that problem with us also.

And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables;

And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.

And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up [[John 2:15-17](#)].

I tell you, the Lord was rough. There is no question about that. I don't like the pictures we have of an anemic-looking Christ. The artists don't seem to realize who He was.

The disciples remembered the verse from [Psalm 69:9](#). This psalm is quoted seventeen times in the New Testament and is one of the six most quoted psalms in the New Testament. It is quoted again in [John 15:25](#) and [John 19:28-29](#). The other psalms which are frequently quoted are [Psalms 2, 22, 89, 110](#), and [Psalm 118](#).

Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?

Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up [[John 2:18-19](#)].

The word that He used for destroy is *luo* which means "to untie." He is, of course, referring to His own human body.

Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? [[John 2:20](#)].

The temple at that time was Herod's temple. It was still in the process of being built, and it had already been under construction for forty-six years.

There is a specific use of words in the Greek here that I want you to see. In [verses 14](#) and [15](#), when it tells of Jesus cleansing the temple, the word used for temple is *hieron* which



refers to the temple as a whole. Specifically, it was the outer court of the temple which Jesus cleansed. The word Jesus uses in [verse 19](#) and the Jews repeat in [verse 20](#) is naos which refers to the inner sanctuary of the temple. This word can also be used in reference to the body as Paul does in [1Corinthians 6:19](#) when he says that the holy place today is not a temple made with hands but that our body is the temple (naos) of the Holy Spirit. The Jews were asking the Lord whether He really meant that He would destroy this temple, but, of course, our Lord meant the temple of His body.

But he spake of the temple of his body [[John 2:21](#)].

Jesus said that if they destroyed this temple, He would "raise it up." The word He used was egeiro, which John uses five times in his Gospel. Its actual meaning is "to wake up" and, each time the word is used, it refers to awaking from the dead. Paul used the same word in his sermon in Antioch of Pisidia where he used it four times. It refers to the resurrection of Christ, and it refers to the resurrection of believers also. It is used in reference to the restoration to life of Lazarus. It was a "waking up." That is the picture which we have in this word egeiro. That is precisely what He meant when He spoke of the temple of His body. But His disciples didn't understand that, and it was not until after His resurrection that they recalled it and referred to it.

When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said [[John 2:22](#)].

### **Jesus Interviews Nicodemus In Jerusalem (second Word) (2:23-25)**

Now we are coming to something that is intensely interesting. Actually, we should read from [verse 23](#) right on into chapter 3 where we have the story of Nicodemus. All of this took place in Jerusalem during the time of the Passover.

Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did [[John 2:23](#)].

A great many folk read that and say, "My, isn't it wonderful that people were believing on Him." But it wasn't wonderful, friend, because theirs was not saving faith at all. They merely nodded in assent when they saw the miracles that He did. So notice what follows.

But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men,

And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man [[John 2:24-25](#)].

The language that is used here is saying that He did not believe in them. You see, they believed in Him, but He didn't believe in them. In other words, to put it very frankly, their faith was not a saving faith, which He realized, of course. He knew what was in their hearts.

This is always a grave danger today for those who say they believe in Jesus. What do you mean when you say you believe in Jesus? Do you mean that you believe in the facts of the gospel? The important question is: Do you trust Him as your Savior who died for your sins? Was He raised for your justification? Is He your only hope of heaven?

This crowd was interested, and when they saw Him perform miracles, they believed. They had to -- they saw the miracles. But Jesus didn't believe in them. He knew their belief was not genuine "because he knew all men." He knew what was in the human heart. He didn't need anyone to testify to Him of man because He knew what was in man.

In other words, the Lord Jesus didn't commit Himself unto the mob there. The great company believed on Him, but He didn't entrust Himself to them. When Nicodemus came to Him at night, our Lord did commit Himself unto him because this man's faith was genuine.

It is unfortunate that the movement here is broken by a chapter break.

## Chapter 3

**THEME:** Jesus interviews Nicodemus in Jerusalem (second word)

### **Jesus Interviews Nicodemus In Jerusalem (second Word) (3:1-21)**

This is an instance where the chapter break is unfortunate; so we will put verses [2:24](#) and [3:1](#) together without the break.

But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men,

And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.

There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews ([John 2:24](#) and) [[John 3:1](#)].

This man is set apart from the mob. Our Lord didn't trust the mob because He knew their faith was not genuine. But this man Nicodemus is a genuine man. Let's get acquainted with him.

Three things are said about him here. The first thing is that he was a man of the Pharisees. That means that he belonged to the best group in Israel. They believed in the inspiration of the Old Testament, they believed in the coming of the Messiah, they believed in miracles, and they believed in the Resurrection. He was a man of the Pharisees, and his name was Nicodemus -- we are given his name. And he was a ruler of the Jews. This tells us of the three masks that this man wore.

This is a picture of modern man if there ever was one. Nicodemus was a man of the Pharisees when he met with them. When he was in their midst, he was just one of them. He more or less let down his guard. Then, when he went out from the Pharisees and walked down the street, people would see him coming and would step off the sidewalk.

He would be wearing his robe and his phylacteries and prayer shawl, and they would say, "My, that is the ruler, Nicodemus. He's an outstanding man. He's a ruler of the Jews." So he would adopt an altogether different attitude with them. But his name was Nicodemus, and down underneath these two masks that he wore, he was just plain, little old "Nicky."

There are many men who live like this today. There's many a man who is a businessman and president of a corporation. He goes into the office in the morning and those in the office speak to him and they call him, "Mister," and they bow and scrape to him. Although they think they know him, they don't really. Then he leaves his office and sees several of his customers that morning and when they ask him about business, he says, "Oh, business is great." Then he goes to his club at noon for lunch. The minute he steps inside the club, he's a different man. He's not Mister So-and-So, the president of a corporation, but now he's just plain old Joe Dokes. They play golf with him, they think they know him, and they call him by his first name. He adopts a different attitude with them. It is a different relationship. They ask him about business and he tells them, "Oh, business is great." Then in the evening, when the work is done, he goes home. He opens the door to his home, steps in and takes off his coat, and drops down into a chair. He's an altogether different man. His wife comes in and looks at him as he sits there dejected with both of his masks off now. He's no longer the businessman, the head of a corporation, and he's no longer one of the fellows at the club. Now he's just plain little old "Joe." His wife asks him, "What's the matter, Joe? Is business bad?" He replies, "Business is rotten." This is who he really is.

The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him [[John 3:2](#)].

This man, Nicodemus, comes to the Lord Jesus with a mask on. He says, "we know." Who is we? The Pharisees. He comes as a man of the Pharisees. He is wearing that mask.

He comes with a genuine compliment. He's no hypocrite. He says that we Pharisees have agreed that You are a teacher come from God. I think that he came to talk about the Kingdom of God. The Pharisees wanted to establish the kingdom and throw off the yoke of Rome, but they had no way of doing it. Here comes this One who is popular -- with the multitudes following Him wherever He goes -- so the Pharisees want to hitch their little wagon to His star. Since He has come from the country up in Galilee and they think He doesn't know how to deal with these politicians as they do, they want to combine forces. So Nicodemus comes, acknowledging that Jesus is a teacher come from God.

The proof that he points to is the miracles Jesus performed. He had to recognize the miracles. Please notice that no one doubted the miracles of our Lord -- not in that day! You've got to be a professor in a seminary today, removed by two thousand years and several thousand miles from the land where it all took place, and then you can doubt the miracles. But you will not find that either the friends of Jesus or His enemies ever doubted His miracles.

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God [[John 3:3](#)].

This is the reason I think he came to talk about the kingdom of God. I see no other reason why our Lord would almost abruptly interrupt him and say to him, "The thing is, you can't even see the kingdom of God except you've been born again." Now here is a man, a Pharisee, who is religious to his fingertips, and yet our Lord told him he couldn't see the kingdom of God except he be born again. If this man came to talk about the kingdom and the establishing of it, which I think he did, then certainly this statement of our Lord detoured him. So now he drops the mask of the man of the Pharisees, but he is still a ruler of the Jews.

Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old?  
can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be  
born? [[John 3:4](#)].

Jesus had said he must be born again. The Greek word for "again" is *anōthen* which means "from above." This man Nicodemus couldn't think of anything but a physical birth. He immediately dropped the condescending mask of the Pharisee and asked how this could be. Our Lord wasn't speaking of a physical birth at all. He was speaking about a spiritual birth. But Nicodemus couldn't understand about a spiritual birth. The reason was that he had no spiritual capacity to comprehend it.

Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be  
born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom  
of God [[John 3:5](#)].

Now what does it mean to be born of water and of the Spirit? There are those who think that to be born of water is a reference to water baptism. But this would be a strange expression if it did refer to that. Then, there have been several very fine Christian doctors who interpret "born of water" as the physical birth which is a birth in water; that is, the child in the womb is in water. I don't think that is what is meant here at all. He wasn't talking about the difference between natural birth and spiritual birth, but He was talking about how a man could be born "from above" or "born again."

As we saw in chapter 2, water is symbolic of the Word of God. We will find later in this book that Jesus says, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" ([John 17:17](#), italics mine). There is a cleansing, sanctifying power in the Word. In [John 15:3](#) Jesus says, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (italics mine). The Word of God is likened unto water again and again. We believe that "born of water and of the Spirit" means that a person must be born again by the Holy Spirit using the Scripture. We believe, very definitely, that no one could be born again without the Word of God applied by the Spirit of God. One today is born from above by the use of water, which is the Word of God, and the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, making it real to the heart.

There are three outstanding conversions in the Book of Acts. They have been given to us, I think, primarily as illustrations. There is the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch, the conversion of Cornelius, and the conversion of Paul. These three men are representatives of the three families of Noah: the son of Shem, the son of Ham, and the son of Japheth. In each of these three cases, the Word of God was used by the Spirit of God for their conversions. God's method seems to be the Word of God, used by the Spirit of God, given through a man of God. I am confident that our Lord, saying that one must be born

of water and of the Spirit, referred to the Spirit of God using the Word of God. Without this, Nicodemus could not enter into the kingdom of God.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit [[John 3:6](#)].

God does not intend to change the flesh, meaning this old nature which you and I have. The fact of the matter is that it can't be changed. The Word of God has much to say about this. The old nature is at war with God. "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God" ([Rom. 8:7-8](#)). God has no program for our old nature, to retrieve it or improve it or develop it or save it. That old nature is to go down into the grave with us. And, if the Lord comes before we go down into the grave, we are to be changed in the twinkling of an eye, which means we will get rid of that old nature. It can never be made obedient to God. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." That is an axiom. God does not intend to save the flesh at all. This old nature must be replaced by the new nature. The spiritual birth is necessary so that you and I may be given a new nature, friend.

Now notice that Nicodemus who had been hiding behind the mask, "ruler of the Jews," will be losing it.

Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit [[John 3:7-8](#)].

Jesus is saying, "You can't tell where the wind comes from and you can't tell where it is going." The air currents and the winds are something that man still doesn't control. The wind blows where it wills. We can't detour it, and we can't change it. There is an attempt being made to seed down the hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean area, but so far we haven't tamed the wind.

Although we can't control the wind, we surely can tell when it's blowing. You and I can be standing out on the street and you can say to me, "The wind is blowing!" I answer, "How do you know?" You would reply, "Look at that tree up there, see how the leaves are blowing, and notice how the tree is bending over." We can tell when the wind is blowing.

Now, friend, I don't know how to explain to you the spiritual birth. I know there are a lot of books being published that claim to explain it, but the difference between the authors and me is that they don't seem to know that they don't know, while I am willing to admit that I don't know. "The wind bloweth where it listeth . . . so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Although we don't quite understand it, it illustrates the way one is born of the Spirit. I can't tell you exactly how the Spirit of God operates, but I can surely tell when He is moving in the lives and hearts of His people. That's exactly what our Lord is saying here.

Our Lord has gotten rid of the two masks. The man who stands before Him is no longer the man of the Pharisees and he is no longer the ruler of the Jews. Who is he? Let's see what the verse says.

Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?  
[\[John 3:9\]](#).

Now he stands there, just plain, little old "Nicky." He's wondering how these things can be, and our Lord is going to talk to him very plainly. By the way, you and I can put up our masks before each other, and there are many people today who use them. When they are with a certain crowd, they act a certain way. The mask, friend, hides just what we really are. When we come to the Lord Jesus, we have to take off all our masks. We can't use them there. You have to be the real "you." You have to come just as you are; then Jesus will deal with you that way. And this is the way He will deal with this man Nicodemus.

Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? [\[John 3:10\]](#).

That's gentle satire that our Lord is using here. He is saying to this man, "You are a ruler in Israel and acting as if I were telling you something that couldn't be true, because if it were true, you would have known about it." And then Jesus asks, "Don't you know these things, Nicodemus?"

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.

If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?

And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven [\[John 3:11-13\]](#).

He tells Nicodemus that he hasn't received His witness even as it was spoken to him.

Then He goes on to show that there is a tremendous movement which is set forth here in the Gospel of John. I called attention in the Introduction to the saying of our Lord in [John 16:28](#), "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father." And now He says, "No man hath ascended up to heaven." That is the answer to those today who feel that Elijah and Enoch went to heaven when they were translated. I don't think so because up to this point the Lord Jesus says that no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven. In other words, He is saying that He is the only One who can speak about heaven because He is the only One who has ascended up to heaven. Now it is true that there are a host of folk who have gone to heaven after Christ, but in the Old Testament when a saint of God died, one of God's own, he went to a place that is called Paradise or Abraham's Bosom -- our Lord called it that (see [Luke 16:22](#)). It was not until after Christ died and ascended to heaven and led captivity captive that He took those who were in Paradise into the presence of God in heaven. Since then, for the child of God, it



has always been ". . . absent from the body . . . present with the Lord" ([2Cor. 5:8](#)). But when Jesus was here, no other man had ascended to heaven.

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life [[John 3:14-15](#)].

When Moses lifted up that brass serpent on a pole because of God's judgment upon the sin of the people, all they had to do for healing was to look to it. As Moses lifted up the serpent, so Christ is going to be lifted up. That serpent, you see, represented the sin of the people. And Christ was made sin for us on the Cross because He bore our sin there. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.

Now our Lord repeats to Nicodemus probably the most familiar words we have in the Bible:

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life [[John 3:16](#)].

There are two things that we need to note here. One is that we must be born again. The other is that the Son of Man must be lifted up. They are related. It takes the death of Christ and the resurrection of Christ -- He must be lifted up. Since He has been lifted up, since He bore our penalty, the Spirit of God can regenerate us. And we must be born again -- that is the only way God can receive us.

The motivation for all of this is that God so loved the world. God never saved the world by love, which is the mistaken thinking of today. It doesn't say that God's love saved the world, because the love of God could never save a sinner. God does not save by love, friends. God saves by grace! "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" ([Eph. 2:8-9](#)). Now, how does God save? God saves by grace. But God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever (you can write your name in here and I can write mine) believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Notice that with the word believe is the little preposition in which means to believe in Christ. That is, we trust Him as the One who bore the penalty for our sins. This is a personal thing. We must each believe that He died in our place and in our stead. My friend, you must believe that He died for you.

For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God [[John 3:17-18](#)].

We see here that, when Jesus came the first time, He was not a judge. He made that very clear to the man who wanted Him to give a judgment between himself and his brother. He said, ". . . Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" ([Luke 12:14](#)). He didn't come as a Judge the first time. He came as the Savior. He will come the next time as the

Judge. But now He says that God didn't send Him into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. Whoever does not believe in Him is condemned. Friend, if you don't believe, you are already condemned. Why? Because "he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." That wonderful name is Jesus -- His name is Jesus because He is the Savior of the world. Anyone who will believe in that name is no longer under condemnation but has everlasting life.

Remember that He is talking to Nicodemus, a Pharisee. The Pharisees believed that the Messiah, when He came, would be a judge. The Old Testament presented two aspects of the coming of the Messiah. One was His coming as a Savior, coming to die, coming to pay a penalty; the other was His coming as the Judge. They reasoned that the Messiah would be a judge when He came because the Old Testament presents that aspect. In [Psalm 2:9](#) we read, "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron. . . ." Daniel speaks of Him as a judge of the whole world ([Dan. 7:13-14](#)). [Psalm 45](#) talks about His ruling the world in righteousness, and [Isaiah 11](#) and [Isaiah 42](#) speak of His judgments in righteousness. The Lord Jesus is making it very clear to Nicodemus that God sent not His Son this time to judge the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. The "world" is the Greek word kosmos -- God's redemptive purpose embraces the entire world. He did not come to condemn or to judge the world but to save the world.

In Christ there is no condemnation. Those who are not in Christ are already condemned. There are a great many who feel that the world is on trial today. It is not. The world is lost. You and I live in a lost world, and we'll not wait until the final judgment to see that we are lost. Our position is something like a man who is in prison being asked whether or not he will accept a pardon. That is the gospel. It is not telling a man that he is on trial. He is already condemned. He is already in prison waiting for execution. But the gospel tells him a pardon is offered to him. The point is, will you accept the pardon? How wonderfully clear that is. The gospel is to save those who are already lost.

And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God [[John 3:19-21](#)].

This is the judgment, you see, of the world. The day that the world crucified Christ -- on that day the world made a decision. It must now be judged by God. The condemnation, or the judgment, is that light is come into the world, but because men's deeds were habitually evil, they loved the darkness. Rats always scurry for a dark corner when light enters a room. Today I received a letter from a girl who said that, before she was saved, she never cared for our Bible-teaching program. Naturally, she did not want the light at all. Only those who turn to Christ want the light.

Notice that in this verse our Lord approaches so many things from the negative point. "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved." We hear today of the power of positive thinking. Believe me, friend,

there is a lot of power in negative thinking and negative speaking. Listen to other things He said. ". . . I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" and ". . . the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" ([Mark 2:17](#); [Mark 10:45](#), italics mine). "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world." And He says that every one that doeth evil hateth the light. In other words, whoever habitually practices what is wrong hates the light. "Light" and "truth" are used in the same way. "He that doeth truth cometh to the light." Error and darkness are always in contrast to light and truth. This ends His interview with Nicodemus.

### **Testimony Of John The Baptist (3:22-36)**

After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized.

And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized.

For John was not yet cast into prison [[John 3:22-24](#)].

At this time, John was still able to preach ". . . the kingdom of heaven is at hand" ([Matt. 3:2](#)). It was after the Lord's temptation that John was cast into prison. The other Gospels tell us that.

Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying.

And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him [[John 3:25-26](#)].

This is a very interesting statement. The disciples of John, I would assume, are jealous. They are suggesting that he should not mention the name of Jesus. They feel it would be best if he didn't. And then they imply that he should not have borne witness to Him to begin with because all are going to Him -- well, now, that is hyperbole -- but it reveals they were jealous and were afraid John was going to lose all his followers.

Now this man John makes a very clear statement. There is not a jealous bone in the body of John.

John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.

Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.

He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.

He must increase, but I must decrease [[John 3:27-30](#)].

One cannot escape the tremendous force of this, friend. John the Baptist is the last of the Old Testament prophets. He is actually not in the church. He makes it clear here: "He that hath the bride. . . ." Who is the bride? The church. "He that hath the bride is the

bridegroom." Then who is John? He is the friend of the Bridegroom. He will be present at the marriage supper of the Lamb, but he is not a part of the church by any means. He is the last of the Old Testament prophets who walks out of the Old Testament onto pages of the New Testament to announce the coming of the Messiah.

"A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven." Again and again this truth will come out. Jesus said, "No man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father" ([John 6:65](#)). How tremendous these statements are! And then John says that Christ must increase but that John must decrease. His ministry is now coming to an end.

He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all.

And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony.

He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.

For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.

The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.

He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him [[John 3:31-36](#)].

John makes it very clear that the Lord Jesus Christ is superior, and he gives them this wonderful testimony concerning the Lord Jesus.

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." You have it right now! Friend, you couldn't have it any clearer than that. John the Baptist preached the gospel, as you can see. He told the message that men are lost without Christ, but they have everlasting life through faith in Christ. What a testimony this man had. What a tremendous witness to the Lord Jesus Christ!

## Chapter 4

**THEME:** Jesus interviews the woman at the well in Sychar (third word); Jesus heals the nobleman's son in Capernaum (second word)

Chapter 4 brings us to the very important incident in the ministry of our Lord as He goes through Samaria.

When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John,

(Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,)

He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee [[John 4:1-3](#)].

This, apparently, was immediately after the incident in chapter 3. It was in the month of December and probably near December 27. This was the time that John the Baptist was in prison. When John was imprisoned, Jesus left Judea and went back into Galilee.

Why did He retire from Judea? Well, He did not want to precipitate a crisis. You see, the Lord Jesus was moving according to schedule, a heavenly schedule set by the Father. He has made it very clear that He came to do the Father's will. Speaking of His own life, He said, "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father" ([John 10:18](#)). They can't touch Him until His time has come. When we reach the thirteenth chapter of John, we will see that His time had then come. "Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father . . ." ([John 13:1](#)) -- you see, He's moving on His Father's schedule, friend; He has come to do the Father's will.

So He departed again into Galilee. He went back up where His headquarters were, which, we believe, were in the city of Capernaum.

### **Jesus Interviews The Woman At The Well In Sychar (third Word) (4:4-42)**

And he must needs go through Samaria [[John 4:4](#)].

That word must attracts our attention. Why must He go through Samaria? In order to reach a certain woman. Listen to Him in [verse 34](#), "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." He must go through Samaria because it is the Father's will for Him to go through Samaria. His destination, apparently, was Cana of Galilee where He had made the water into wine. There was a certain nobleman whose son was sick, and He is headed in that direction. But He must go through Samaria.

There were three routes He could have taken. He could have gone along the coast. There was a route there, and it is still there today, by the way. He could have gone through Peraea, which is up at the other side of Jordan. Or He could go through Samaria. Josephus tells us that, although the most direct route was through Samaria, the Jews didn't go that route due to the antipathy between the Jews and the Samaritans. However, our Lord went through Samaria.

Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph [[John 4:5](#)].

Joseph's tomb is nearby. At the fork of the old Roman road south of Sychar He meets the woman at the well. Mount Gerizim is to the northwest, and the synagogue of the Samaritans is on the slope of Mount Gerizim. I've been at that spot and have taken pictures there. This is the place to which our Lord comes.

Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour [[John 4:6](#)].

The sixth hour according to Roman time would be six o'clock in the evening, but we are following Jewish time here and the sixth hour was twelve noon. He was weary with His journey. How perfectly human He was. You see, John presents Him as the Son of God, as God manifest in the flesh. "The Word was made flesh" ([John 1:14](#)). Friend, although the language is simple, it expresses something that is overwhelming. Think of it! The God of eternity came down to this earth. The Word was made flesh and dwelled among us -- He pitched His tent here among us. He went through Samaria and sat down at a well in order that He might reach this woman of Samaria!

The Samaritans were a group of poor people in that day.

There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink [[John 4:7](#)].

This woman is obviously a dissolute woman. I think she is probably as common as pig tracks. She's rude and immoral. We would call her today a hussy or a broad, if you please.

What a contrast she is to the man, Nicodemus, we saw in the preceding chapter. And notice how differently our Lord deals with her. With Nicodemus, a man who was religious to his fingertips, our Lord was harsh and blunt, but see how gentle He is with this woman. He asks a favor of her. He appeals to her sympathy -- He is thirsty and asks for a drink. What condescension on His part! He is the Water of Life and He asks her for water.

(For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.) [[John 4:8](#)].

It is noon and His disciples have gone to the city to buy food. The fact that they were buying the Samaritans' food also reveals Jesus' total rejection of the Jewish prejudice which considered Samaritan food unclean, even as swine's flesh.

Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans [[John 4:9](#)].

Twice she refuses His request. She's rude here, and insolent, impudent, and impertinent -- she tosses her pert and saucy head. She makes this racial distinction. It is said that the Samaritans would sell to the Jews, but they wouldn't drink from the same vessel with them.

You see what our Lord is doing here. He is coming to the very lowest place to which He can come. But watch how the Lord deals with her. He is very skillful and sympathetic, but He also talks with her forcefully, faithfully, and factually. He doesn't give her a lecture on integration or civil rights. He isn't a candidate for some office. He just appeals to her womanly curiosity. He creates an interest and a thirst.

Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water [[John 4:10](#)].



As He appeals to her curiosity, her attitude immediately changes.

The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?

Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? [[John 4:11-12](#)].

The woman calls Him "Sir" which she had left out before. Then she was impudent and rude, but now there is a difference. The whole point here is that this woman is thinking in terms of the physical; her thinking could get no higher than the water level down in the well.

Notice that she identifies herself with Jacob. She does this purposely, as racially the Samaritans were Jacob's descendants who had intermarried with peoples from the north following the Assyrian Captivity of Israel in 721 B.C.

Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life [[John 4:13-14](#)].

Jesus makes it clear that He is not talking about water in Jacob's well. Rather, He is making a contrast, you see. Today the crowds are going to the water holes of this world, seeking satisfaction. They also are constantly looking for the physical, not the spiritual satisfaction. But now Jesus has created a desire in this woman's heart for the spiritual water.

The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw [[John 4:15](#)].

She's thirsty for spiritual water, but then her thinking goes right back down into that well again.

Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither [[John 4:16](#)].

This is the master stroke. Although the water is available for all, there is a condition to be met -- there must be a thirst, a need. She must, therefore, recognize that she is a sinner. So our Lord says to her, "Go call your husband." That is a touchy subject. She becomes flippant again.

The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband:

For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly [[John 4:17-18](#)].

She was accurate about that. She had had five husbands, but she didn't have one then. She was living with a man in adultery. Our Lord insists that, when you come to Him, you

must deal with sin. All secrets must come out before Him. Here was a sinner. One of the reasons she was not so popular with the women of the town was because she was too popular with the men of the town.

The woman was actually shocked into reverence. But then she wanted to change the subject by opening a religious argument.

The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship [[John 4:19-20](#)].

Now that will make a good religious argument, friend. Where are you going to worship? In this mountain or in Jerusalem? That caused many an argument in that day.

There are many people today who want to argue religion, but they don't want to live it. I'm convinced that most of the superficiality in our churches today is there as a cover-up of sin. Unfortunately our churches are honey-combed with hypocrisy, a compromise with evil, and a refusal to face up to sin. You know, it's easy to preach about the sin of the Moabites which they committed about 4,000 years ago, but what about our sins today? It was the brother of Henry Ward Beecher who said, "I like a sermon where one man is the preacher and one man is the congregation so that when the preacher says, 'Thou art the man,' there's no mistaking whom he's talking about." There are many ministers today who are afraid to preach on the sins of Christians. This was confirmed to me several years ago. I was speaking in a summer conference on the first eight chapters of Romans. This is not often used as a subject because Paul deals with sin. At first I could actually feel a resentment. By the middle of the week, the Holy Spirit began to break up hard hearts and a fellow who seemed to be the most pompous and pious saint came to me wanting to confess his sins. I told him not to confess them to me, but to go to the great High Priest, the Lord Jesus. He would hear him when he confessed, and He would forgive him. What a change took place in this man! At that same conference two ministers came to me, personally and privately, asking, "Do you preach like this in your own church?" Well, I did preach like that, but I found out there was a little cell of super-duper saints who liked to criticize the preacher so as to take the attention off themselves. They really wanted to be active -- in fact, they wanted to run the church -- but they did not want to deal with sin in their lives.

Our Lord did not avoid or sidestep the issue of personal sin. I believe that if you really have honest questions or doubts, the Lord will reveal the solution to you. And our Lord dealt with this woman on the question she had raised.

Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews [[John 4:21-22](#)].

The thing that was important to this woman was whether she should worship God in this mountain where the Samaritans worship Him, or should she worship Him in Jerusalem.

Jesus told her the day was coming when He would not be worshiped in either place. Why?

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth [[John 4:23-24](#)].

It is irrelevant, therefore, where you worship God. It is not where but how you worship Him that is important. Our Lord answered her very adequately. God is a Spirit. You don't have to run to this place or that place. True worshipers worship Him in spirit and in truth.

The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things [[John 4:25](#)].

Even the Samaritans were looking for the Messiah to come. That is something that is very interesting. Today the second coming of Christ is believed and loved by those who are His. Those who are not really His, though church members, have a nagging feeling that He might come. Although they say they don't believe in His second coming, it still disturbs them.

An atheist in London several years ago made the statement that the thing that disturbed him was that the Bible might be true and that Jesus might come again. If He did, this man realized he would be in trouble. Believe me, he surely will be in trouble!

The woman now is profoundly interested, and there is a wistful longing in her heart.

The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.

Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he [[John 4:25-26](#)].

How majestic and sublime this statement is! This woman is brought face to face now with the Savior of the world, the Messiah. Friend, this is my question to you today, whoever you are, wherever you are, and however you are: Have you come face to face with the Lord Jesus Christ as this woman did? I tell you, she found herself in His presence. "I that speak unto thee am he!"

And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?

The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men,

Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? [[John 4:27-29](#)].

The woman had turned in faith to the Lord Jesus, so now she rushes into the city to tell others. Notice that she doesn't talk to the women because she's not on speaking terms

with them. Some of those men were involved with her, and they are very much interested in knowing whether He could tell all things that she had done. So here is what happened.

Then they went out of the city, and came unto him [[John 4:30](#)].

The men came because of her witness. That is very important for us to see. The fact that she witnessed to others is evidence of her faith.

In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat.

But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of.

Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him aught to eat?

Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work [[John 4:31-34](#)].

The reason that He went through Samaria was to do the Father's will by reaching this woman.

Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.

And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.

And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth.

I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours [[John 4:35-38](#)].

Remember that this took place in December, and harvest in that area would be in April.

In this age in which we are living today, our business is to sow. I am attempting through the radio media to sow the Word of God. I hope that good churches will reap because I have sown. One pastor told me that because of the radio messages, he had received into his church over one hundred members. We are reaching a great many people who are members of liberal churches, but they want to know where to go to be taught the Word of God. This pastor said that because folk had listened to the broadcast and then realized that they wanted the Word of God, they had come to his church. They will join churches where the Word is taught. One sows and another reaps. I rejoice in that.

And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did [[John 4:39](#)].

A great company was reached in Samaria through this woman with the "shady" past!

So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days.

And many more believed because of his own word;

And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world [[John 4:40-42](#)].

What a wonderful thing we see here. They came to the Living Water and they drank. The only condition was for them to thirst. You will never know that you thirst until you know that you are a sinner, friend. Isaiah cried, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters . . ." ([Isa. 55:1](#)). Our Lord gave the same invitation: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink" ([John 7:37](#)). The Water of Life is for "any man." But the one condition is thirst. Many of the Samaritans came to Him, and they drank.

As many men came to Christ through the witness of the woman at Samaria, today many people are led to know Christ through the influence of another. In fact, it is the effect of one life upon other lives, the impact of one personality upon another, which often leads people to Christ. Some young people have remarkable parents, or one remarkable parent, and because of the influence of the parent they may come to Christ. They live in the light of that parent with no personal contact with Christ Himself. Then later they stumble and fall when the influence of the parent is gone. I've seen that happen again and again during my years as a pastor. It is a wonderful thing to exercise an influence on another for Christ, but don't let it stand there! See that the individual gets through to Christ in a personal relationship for himself. The Samaritans said, "Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."

### **Jesus Heals The Nobleman's Son In Capernaum (second Work) (4:43-54)**

Now after two days he departed thence, and went into Galilee.

For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country.

Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galilaeans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast.

So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum [[John 4:43-46](#)].

Notice the geography John gives us here again. Jesus leaves Samaria and goes into Galilee, and many Galileans believe on Him because they had seen Him at the feast and had watched the things He had done. Then He goes specifically to Cana of Galilee because there is a certain nobleman there whose son is way down in Capernaum.

When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judaea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death [[John 4:47](#)].

Here is a father who exercised faith in behalf of his son. This illustrates the thing we have just been saying. Make sure your own child has a personal contact with Jesus Christ. The essential thing would have been for the father to have brought the boy to Christ. I think

that we have a right to claim our loved ones for Christ. We should exercise our own influence upon the lives of others. I believe that you've got to be a witness to your loved ones and that you've got to reveal in your own life that you have a living faith in Christ and that it works.

A man who was a member of the church I served in Los Angeles came to me one day, asking me to pray for the salvation of his son. Unfortunately, although he was an officer of the church, his life wasn't very good. The boy had walked out of the house, and I honestly couldn't blame the boy for it at all. The father wanted me to counsel with the boy and attempt to lead him to Christ. I very candidly told him that I wouldn't talk with the boy. I said, "You've served that boy 'roast preacher' for so long that he hasn't any use for me. You've done nothing but criticize. Now you've lost your influence with him, and I will pray that someone else will exert an influence on your boy and bring him to the Lord." Friend, if you are a parent, remember that your life exerts a powerful influence upon your children, both good and bad.

The nobleman came to Jesus asking Him to come down and heal his son who was at the point of death.

Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.

The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die.

Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way [[John 4:48-50](#)].

This man protested that he was not just looking for signs and wonders; he wanted his boy. That was all-important to him. Jesus responded to this man's faith and He did heal the boy. That is wonderful.

However, it's too bad he didn't bring the boy into the presence of Christ. That was of the utmost importance. We hope he did so after the boy was well. The Samaritan woman, even though she had been a bad woman, brought the men face-to-face with the Lord Jesus.

You can influence someone that no preacher can reach. In fact, nobody else can reach that individual but you. You have influence over that individual. Be very sure that you bring him face to face with Christ.

And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth.

Then inquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him [[John 4:51-52](#)].

It's difficult to be sure just what time John is using. According to Roman time this would have been about seven in the evening.



So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house.

This is again the second miracle that Jesus did, when he was come out of Judaea into Galilee [[John 4:53-54](#)].

The father claimed his whole household for Christ. They would each have to exert faith personally, but this man claimed them and would exert his influence for Christ.

The word for miracle here is actually the word sign. This is the second sign that Jesus did.

## Chapter 5

**THEME:** Jesus heals man at Pool of Bethesda (third work)

### JESUS HEALS MAN AT POOL OF BETHESDA (Third Work)

Chapter 5 brings us to this very wonderful incident of the healing of the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda. Actually, in a sense, this miracle is the turning point in the ministry of Christ. You see, this miracle set the bloodhounds of hate on His track, and they never let up until they put Him to death on the cross.

Notice [verse 16](#):

And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day.

But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.

Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God [[John 5:16-18](#)].

You see, the clash with them was over the Sabbath Day; they never forgave Him for what He did on the Sabbath. They hated Him because He said, ". . . The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath" ([Mark 2:27](#)). The miracle that our Lord performed here really put murder into their hearts. They hated Him because of the Sabbath and because He made Himself equal with God.

"Making himself equal with God" is a clear-cut claim to deity. I have heard the liberals say that the Bible does not teach the deity of Christ. I don't know what those men are talking about. I feel they are either woefully ignorant or they are absolutely dishonest. You may disagree with the Lord Jesus, and you may disagree with the Bible, but how can you put any other construction on these plain words, "making himself equal with God"? If that isn't claiming deity, then I do not know how a person would be able to claim deity.

Now let's go back to the beginning of the chapter. It starts with a feast of the Jews. The question arises as to which feast this is. It is probably the Passover. There are three great feasts of the Jews: "Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast

of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles . . ." ([Deut. 16:16](#)). Since in [John 2](#) we find the Passover, and in [John 7](#) we find the Feast of Tabernacles, many have assumed that this feast is Pentecost. We are not told because that is not really the important thing here. I rather think it could be the Feast of Passover again.

After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches.

In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water [[John 5:1-3](#)].

Now it was really the sheep gate, not a market, where the pool was. The name of the pool was Bethesda which means "house of olives" or "house of mercy." It had five porches. In these lay a great multitude. The word great is not in the better manuscripts, but it doesn't change the meaning because a multitude is a great number anyway. "A multitude of impotent folk" means people without strength.

Many years ago when I was pastor in Pasadena, I went up one year to speak at the Preventorium where little fellows and girls who had weak lungs or tuberculosis were cared for. They presented an Easter program. There was one little fellow there who quoted this entire fifth chapter of John, all forty-seven verses. He made only one error and I always felt it wasn't much of an error. In [verse 3](#), he quoted it like this, "In these lay a great multitude of important folk." Quite a few people smiled when he said that. I got to thinking about it and realized he was correct. They were important. One of them caused the Lord Jesus to come to this place, and any of the others could have turned to Him. They were important to Him.

The fourth verse of this chapter is not in the better manuscripts. To say this does not mean that I don't believe in the inerrancy of Scripture. I want to assure you that I do believe in the inerrancy of Scripture. Why in the world do you think that I teach the entire Bible? But I do think we should heed scholarship -- fundamental, conservative scholarship which suggests that because it is not in the better manuscripts, it was put in by a scribe as a word of explanation. I believe it is factual, and it helps me understand why this crowd of impotent folk were here. But whether it belongs in Scripture or not is not worth an argument. To me it is not the essential thing because there is something far more important here. However, I did want to give this word of explanation.

For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had [[John 5:4](#)].

This is the explanation of why they were there. The belief was that an angel stirred the water at a certain season. I personally feel that a great many cures took place there that were psychological cures. There are a number of people today, just as there were then, who are sick in their minds, ignorant, and superstitious. There are quite a few who go to faith healers today who believe they get healed. There is always a question whether or not they were ever really sick. Another question is whether they stay permanently healed. My

point is that the Lord Jesus Christ heals today just as He did at the pool of Bethesda, and that one is not healed by some moving of the water.

And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years [[John 5:5](#)].

Our attention is directed to one man here. Whether he had been at the pool all that time we do not know. We are told that he was infirm for thirty-eight years and that apparently he moved with difficulty. I would judge he was the worst case there. Think of how frustrating it was for this poor fellow! Even if he hadn't been there for the thirty-eight years, he must have been there for several years. He must have been much older than thirty-eight years, and his condition was the result of his own sin. In [verse 14](#) the Lord Jesus said to him, "Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." You can well imagine this poor fellow lying there, keeping his eyes on the water, waiting for the moving of the water. He would hope somehow or other to be the first one to get down in the water. But there had been disappointment after disappointment. He was in such a bad state that the others would always get into the water first. I'm sure he saw many cures there. People who were sick in their minds would be healed in their minds.

Our Lord apparently knew that he had been impotent for a long time and that he had waited at the pool for a long time. Notice His approach to him.

When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? [[John 5:6](#)].

That's a peculiar question to ask a sick man. It seems rather absurd, doesn't it? Of course, he wanted to be made whole, but the Lord asked him the question for two reasons. First, to beget hope in the man. His case was hopeless, and I think the light of hope had pretty much gone out of his life, and he was in despair. Secondly, and this is the most important, Jesus wanted to get the man's eyes off the pool. Jesus wanted him to look to Him. I think this man had never noticed anybody else who came up there. He never watched anything else but just kept his eyes on the pool. So our Lord startled him with the question, "Do you earnestly desire to be made whole?" I think the man normally and naturally would look up. Who would ask a question like that? His answer was, "Of course, I want to be made whole. But that's not my problem. What I need is somebody to put me in the water."

The condition of so many people today is just like that man who was watching that pool, waiting for something to happen. I'm bold enough to say that it is the condition of all of us in these days. We are waiting. Just think of the people in our churches, waiting for some great, sweeping emotion to engulf them. Then there are those who are postponing making a decision for Christ. They are not willing to turn to Him because they are looking for an emotion; they are looking for something to happen. Another great group of people today have their eyes on business, and they are waiting for something to happen to get rich quick. I was pastor in Texas in a place where they drilled for oil, and I knew a lot of my folk who just sat around watching a dry well. There wasn't any moving of water or anything else. It was dry. They wanted that to become an oil well, and they had their eyes

on the physical. Because they were entranced by the material, they lost sight of Jesus Christ. Then there are some people today who are looking to some individual. They've heard of the experience of someone else, and they are waiting for something like that to happen in their lives. But they are doomed to bitter disappointment. I've talked to many of these people. They come under all of these categories. They are all waiting with their eyes fixed on some thing. Unfortunately, they have their eyes fixed on the wrong thing, or the wrong individual, or the wrong happening. I'll ask you a question. Are you waiting for something to happen these days? If you tell me what it is, I could write your biography. The Thessalonians ". . . turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God" ([1Thess. 1:9](#)). They took their eyes off things in Thessalonica, and they turned to the Lord Jesus Christ.

I'm sure this man looked up rather amazed that anyone would ask him that question.

The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me [[John 5:7](#)].

What a sad story that tells. This poor, helpless, hopeless, homeless, lonely fellow is really saying, "Would I be made whole? Of course, I would. But I haven't anybody to put me in the pool. Would You put me in the pool?" The Lord Jesus has no notion of getting that man into the pool. He is going to get him out of it and away from it. The minute the man gets his eye on the Lord Jesus, something will happen.

Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk [[John 5:8](#)].

He told him to rise (get up), take up his bed, and walk. He was to give up his place there at the pool to somebody else. He's to take his bed because no arrangements will be made for a relapse. There isn't going to be any relapse!

And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.

The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed.

He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk.

Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk?

And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place [[John 5:9-13](#)].

The next thing that happens is that the enemies accuse the man of carrying his bed on the Sabbath Day. Well, that was the proof that he was healed. Can you imagine how ridiculous these religious rulers were to be upset because he carried his bed on the Sabbath Day?

Our Lord seemed to use a miraculous way of getting away from the crowd there that day because the man really didn't know who it was that had healed him.

Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.

The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole.

And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day [[John 5:14-16](#)].

What actually happened was simply this: the Lord healed him physically at the pool of Bethesda, but He healed his soul there in the temple. Sin had caused the man's trouble. First he got a well body, and then he got a well soul. He came to know Jesus, you see. Then he was able to tell who He was. This impotent man was waiting and waiting, looking at the pool, and one day Jesus, the Lamb of God, came by and saw him. Then the man saw Jesus. The impotent man met the Omnipotent Man. The thing that is amazing to me is that there were multitudes left in those porches and they were not healed. Today there are multitudes who are not saved. Isn't Jesus willing to save them? Yes, but they haven't looked at Jesus. They're just waiting, friend, waiting for something to happen.

This is the incident that put those bloodhounds of hate on the trail of Jesus. (When John says the "Jews," he is actually referring to the religious rulers of the Jews.) This is the point at which they began to persecute Jesus and sought to slay Him.

But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work [[John 5:17](#)].

When that man got down into the ditch of sin, the Lord Jesus and the Father could no longer rest on the Sabbath Day. Although God rested after the creation of the physical universe, after the fall of man He didn't rest, because man, like an ox, had gotten down into the ditch.

Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God [[John 5:18](#)].

These men never let up until they folded their arms beneath His cross.

### **The Claims Of Jesus (5:19-47)**

Our Lord now goes on to make three tremendous claims concerning Himself. It is on the basis of these claims that we can use [John 5:24](#) in presenting the gospel. We will try to put it all together here.

The first claim:

Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise [[John 5:19](#)].

The Lord Jesus is saying that He is God and that He can do what God does. There is a perfect correspondence and harmony between the Father and the Son. Therefore, the charge that was made against Him was absurd. The Son does not contradict the Father, nor does the Father contradict the Son. Jesus does what God does. Jesus can forgive sins. Then He goes on to say that there is a personal and intimate relationship between the Father and the Son.

For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel [[John 5:20](#)].

The second claim:

For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will [[John 5:21](#)].

Jesus imparts life, gives life, to whom He will. If the Father raises the dead, the Son will raise the dead. Today we hear a great deal being said about the gift of healing, but with that gift went the ability to raise the dead. Paul raised the dead, and so did Simon Peter. Our Lord gave them that gift. It was an apostolic gift of healing and raising the dead, which disappeared with the apostles. The Lord Jesus raised the dead. He raised the dead because He was God. These other men did it in the name of the Lord Jesus.

The third claim:

For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son [[John 5:22](#)].

A literal reading would be, "For not even the Father judgeth anyone, but He hath given all judgment unto the Son." You can have everlasting life if you hear His word and believe it. Why? Because the Lord Jesus does what God does, because He raises the dead, and because He is going to judge all men someday. Whether saved or lost, they are going to appear before Him. The believers will appear before Him at the judgment which we call the Bema seat of Christ to see whether they receive a reward (see [2Cor. 5:10](#)). The lost will come before Him at the Great White Throne (see [Rev. 20:11](#)). Remember that the Lord Jesus did not come to judge the first time, but He will come as Judge the next time, and all judgment is committed to Him.

Jesus definitely puts Himself on a par with God the Father.

That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him [[John 5:23](#)].

It is on the basis of these three claims, these three great principles, that He goes on to this wonderful statement in [verse 24](#) which is used so much in personal work today. It is right that we should use it, but we need to remember to back it up with these claims Jesus has just made.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not



come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life [[John 5:24](#)].

Notice that He says, "hath everlasting life," which is right now -- present tense. The believer does not come into condemnation, which is another word for judgment. He is passed out of death into life.

Now who is saying this? This is a tremendous promise, but who is making it? That is the important thing.

Years ago, in a cotton patch in my southland, a man stood up and read to those that were weary from picking cotton and were lying on their sacks. He read, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" ([Matt. 11:28](#)). One man raised himself from off his cotton sack and said, "Them's good words, but who said them?"

Well, these are good words: "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." Who said them? Christ has given us the three statements concerning Himself which are the foundation for this verse. Jesus is God ([v. 19](#)); He raises the dead ([v. 21](#)); and He is going to judge ([v. 22](#)). Who He is makes these words truly wonderful words.

Now Jesus goes on with another great statement.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice [[John 5:25,28](#)].

What does He mean in [verse 25](#) when He says, "the hour . . . now is"? Well, we're in that period of the hour that is coming. [Verse 28](#) makes it clear that the hour has not yet arrived, but "the hour is coming." The whole thought is that we are living in the period or the age or the dispensation that is moving to the time when "the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live."

If we are in the period of the "hour that is coming," then what does He mean that it also "now is"? Who are the dead who hear His voice now? In [John 11](#) where we have the incident in which Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, you will remember that He said to the two sisters at the time of the death of Lazarus, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" ([John 11:25-26](#), italics mine). "Though he were dead." Does this mean the person that is in the grave hears? No, no, this is referring to spiritual death! Death means separation from God. The hour is coming when those who are in the grave shall hear His voice and shall live, but the hour is now when those who are spiritually dead hear His voice and live. Paul wrote to the Ephesian believers that they had been dead in trespasses and sins. That is the spiritual condition of everyone. But then, "he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death [out of spiritual death] unto life," the life that He gives. So in [verses 25](#) and 28 He is talking about two separate

things. The time is now when Christ gives spiritual life. The hour is coming when He will raise the dead out of the grave.

For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;

And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man [[John 5:26-27](#)].

The Lord Jesus is a life-giver, you see. Not only does He have life, but He gives life. He also has the right to execute judgment. He came the first time as the Savior and not to judge, but He is coming the next time as the Judge. At that time, those in the graves will hear His voice.

Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation [[John 5:28-29](#)].

A better translation for the word damnation would be "judgment."

There are two resurrections mentioned here. The Book of Revelation is even more specific and describes the completion of the first resurrection ([Rev. 20:4-6](#)) and the second resurrection ([Rev. 20:11-15](#)). The first resurrection is the resurrection of all the saved -- the first phase of which is the next thing on the agenda of God. We call it the rapture of the church. "Rapture" is a good translation of the Greek *harpazo*. Paul used it in [1Thessalonians 4:17](#) where he says we shall be "caught up," which means "to be raptured." The Rapture takes place at some time in the future. It is not dated and there are no signs given for it. It could happen at any moment. He is going to call His own out of this world, both the living and the dead. That is part of the first resurrection. Then, during the Tribulation period a great many believers will become martyrs. They will be raised at the end of the Great Tribulation period together with the Old Testament saints. That also is part of the first resurrection. They will be raised to live forever here upon this earth. That is the first resurrection. It is the resurrection of life, as our Lord called it.

Then the resurrection of judgment is the Great White Throne judgment when all the unsaved of all the ages will be raised. They wanted to be judged by their works, and they will be! They will stand before God who is just and righteous; they will have an opportunity to stand before a Holy God and to plead their case. But God has already warned them; there is no one saved in that judgment. It is only the lost who are brought there, and they will be judged according to their works, because there are degrees in punishment (see [Luke 12:47-48](#)).

I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me [[John 5:30](#)].

Jesus says, "I can of mine own self do nothing." That is His self-limitation when He came down to this earth and took upon Himself our humanity. He came down as a man, not to do His own will but the Father's will.

This is the example for us today. You and I have a will, an old nature, that is not obedient to God. We can't be obedient to God because we are actually in rebellion against God. That is the natural state of every man. That is the reason our Lord had to tell Nicodemus that he must be born again. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" ([John 3:6](#)). You and I have to have the new birth because this old nature is incorrigible, my friend. It is in rebellion against God. It has been carrying a protest banner before the gates of heaven ever since man came out through the gates of paradise in the Garden of Eden.

Now our Lord is going to show that there are witnesses to the fact that His claims are true.

If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.

There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true [[John 5:31-32](#)].

The Scripture teaches that in the mouth of two or three witnesses a thing is established. "I bear witness of myself" -- that would not stand up in court. But, "There is another that beareth witness of me." The witness He is referring to here is not John the Baptist. They would immediately think that is the one to whom He is referring, but He makes it clear that He is not referring to a human witness at all.

Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth [[John 5:33](#)].

Now, He is saying that John the Baptist did bare witness to Him. So that is one witness whom they knew. But He is referring to still another Witness, not a human witness, and that makes two witnesses for them to recognize.

But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved [[John 5:34](#)].

He claims a higher Witness than the witness of man. Yet, He does give a testimony to John the Baptist. In our King James Version He calls John a "light." A more accurate translation is "lamp." You see, Jesus is the Light; John was His witness, His light bearer, His lamp, if you please.

He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.

But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me [[John 5:35-36](#)].

Here we see that the credentials that the Lord Jesus had were the miracles that He performed. This idea today that there are those who have the same power that Jesus had is, to my judgment, blasphemy. You see, these miracles which He performed attested that He was who He claimed to be. And, friend, there weren't just a few isolated instances of healing. He didn't put on healing services. He took no offerings. He didn't have people get in a line and come by Him. He moved out into the crowds, into the highways and the byways. And as He moved along, people were healed. I've called attention to this in the

Gospels again and again, and it is important to refresh our memories concerning this. Friend, there were not just a half dozen, or even a hundred or two whom He had healed; there were literally thousands of people whom He had healed. It was openly demonstrated. Nobody in that day contradicted the fact that He healed -- he would have been a fool if he had. It is over nineteen hundred years later in a musty library in New York City, thousands of miles removed, that scholars can sit down and write books declaring that they don't believe Jesus performed miracles. But that doesn't prove a thing, friend. His miracles were His credentials. His works bore witness that the Father had sent Him.

And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape.

And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not.

Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me [[John 5:37-39](#)].

This last verse is so frequently misunderstood. It is not an imperative but is an indicative. Let me put it like this: "You search the Scriptures." He's making a statement; He is not urging them to do something. He tells them that they search the Scriptures thinking that in them they will find eternal life, but they don't understand that the Scriptures testify of Jesus. Friend, you had better be careful so that you find Jesus in the Bible. If you don't, then your search is in vain.

And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life [[John 5:40](#)].

The Scriptures speak of Him, but the religious rulers are unwilling to come to Him. They are missing the point.

But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.

I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive [[John 5:42-43](#)].

Someday the Antichrist is coming, and the world will receive him. They rejected Christ. The Antichrist will come in his own name, will have an image made of himself, and they will accept him.

How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only? [[John 5:44](#)].

They looked for the applause of men. Back scratching is still the curse today in our churches, even our good churches. There are teachers with itching ears. Each one wants to compliment the other rather than tell the truth of the Word of God. They "seek not the honour that cometh from God only."

Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust.

For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me.

But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words? [[John 5:45-47](#)].

Friend, that is so important. Back in the books of the Pentateuch which I have recently taught, I have attempted to point out the Lord Jesus. Although I don't find Him on every page, I believe He is on every page of the Pentateuch. He says, "Moses . . . wrote of me." I think He is on every page of the Bible.

When a man begins to make an attack upon the Old Testament, watch out! He really is making a subtle attack on the Lord Jesus Christ. I'm afraid there are many men who very foolishly begin to question the Old Testament and don't realize what they are doing. It is like the man at the insane asylum who was digging at the foundation. A man came by and asked, "Why are you trying to dig out the foundation? Don't you live in the building?" "Yes," he answered, "but I live upstairs!" I'm afraid that a great many foolish people say, "But I live in the New Testament." My friend, the Old Testament is the foundation. Our Lord said, "If you believe not his writings, how shall you believe my words?" They both go together.

## Chapter 6

**THEME:** Jesus feeds five thousand near Sea of Galilee (fourth work and word)

We come now to the miraculous feeding of the five thousand -- a miracle recorded in all four Gospels. In the Gospel of John, Jesus follows this miracle with a discourse on the Bread of Life. John records only certain miracles, and he calls the miracles signs because signs are for a purpose. You will remember that he said, "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" ([John 20:30-31](#)). This is an important verse because it is actually the key to this entire Gospel.

Now we find Jesus feeding the five thousand, and out of this grows His great discourse on the fact that He is the true Bread of God.

### **Jesus Feeds The Five Thousand (fourth Work And Word) (6:1-15)**

After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias [[John 6:1](#)].

After what things? Well, the things that were recorded back in the fifth chapter. He had left Jerusalem and probably had come up on the east side of the Jordan River. Now He crosses over the Sea of Galilee and, apparently, comes to the north section. This took place about six months to a year after the events of chapter 5. It was about one year before His crucifixion, by the way.

The way the events are dated is by the feasts that John mentions. As we have said, John ties his Gospel down to a calendar and to a map. The One who came out of heaven's glory, the Word who was made flesh, the One who pitched His tent here among us, that

One walked by the Sea of Galilee, went to Cana and to Nazareth, Capernaum, Bethsaida, Jerusalem, Decapolis, etc. So we read that "after these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee." John says, "And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh" ([v. 4](#)). So apparently He had been back in the land of Galilee, because in chapter 5 He had been in Jerusalem and had gone in the sheep gate. This indicates a time lapse between chapters 5 and 6 when He went over the Sea of Galilee.

And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased [[John 6:2](#)].

The tense of the verb would be more accurate if it were translated, "And a great multitude was following Him" and "because they were seeing His miracles."

This great multitude didn't actually believe in Him in a saving way. They didn't trust Him. They were interested in His miracles. They wanted Him because He could make them well.

Friend, the mission of Jesus was not to restore our physical bodies. He wants to be Lord of our hearts. This is why John had said at the very beginning that He "needed not that any should testify of man; for he knew what was in man" ([John 2:25](#)). He didn't commit Himself to that crowd back there at Jerusalem, and He's not about to commit Himself to this crowd that is gathering around now. They simply want to see the miracles that He can perform.

And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples [[John 6:3](#)].

The place that is pointed out to tourists visiting Israel is not what we would call a mountain. Actually, in that land three thousand feet is about as high as they go, but the hills are very rugged. The one they point out is a very lovely spot and could well be the place where He fed the five thousand. It's near Capernaum, by the way.

Jesus went up into the mountain and sat there with His disciples. The Passover was near.

When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? [[John 6:5](#)].

Philip was the quiet one; he never had much to say. Our Lord was drawing him out at this particular time. You will find in [verse 8](#) that Philip and Andrew seem to have gotten together. Andrew and Philip evidently were quite active men, very busy, but just not speakers. You don't hear either one of them. Yet Andrew is the one who brought Simon Peter to the Lord, and the Greeks came to Philip and Andrew when they wanted to see Jesus. Philip got together with Andrew to find out what to do. So we find them together here.

Is our Lord asking for advice in His question to Philip? May I say to you, He never asked for advice. Then why did He ask Philip the question?

And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do [[John 6:6](#)].



He was testing Philip. Philip looked over that crowd that was coming -- five thousand men besides women and children. I estimate it must have been at least fifteen thousand people. Friend, that's a pretty good-sized crowd, especially for that land and in that day. When Philip saw them coming, he wasn't thinking of a miracle at all.

Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little [[John 6:7](#)].

Why did Philip light upon that fixed sum of two hundred denarii? I think that is what they had in the treasury at that time. Probably Judas had made a treasurer's report that morning, and that was the total. Philip looked at the crowd, then thought of what they had in the treasury bag, and said that two hundred pennyworth of bread would not be sufficient for them. The "penny" was the Roman coin denarius. One denarius represented a day's wages for a common laborer.

The other Gospel writers tell us that the disciples advised the Lord Jesus. They wanted to be on the board of directors. They said, "Why don't You send the multitude away?" Our Lord answered, "We're not going to send them away. We're going to have them sit down and we're going to feed them" (cf. [Luke 9:12-15](#)). These men who had elected themselves to the board of directors found themselves waiters, serving the crowd. And that is what they should have been doing all the time.

By the way, this leads me to say that there are too many men in the church today who want position. They want to have an office; they want to be on the board of directors. They like to tell the preacher what to do. Yet they do not have all the necessary information to begin with, nor do they have spiritual discernment. They don't realize that they are the ones who ought to be out doing the work of the ministry. They ought to be out witnessing for the Lord -- passing the bread to the hungry multitudes. But generally they would rather advise the pastor how to do it.

So here our Lord is drawing out Philip, and Philip says they don't have enough money to buy sufficient bread. Since Philip and Andrew are together, Andrew speaks up.

There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many? [[John 6:9](#)].

Andrew, you see, had been circulating around through the crowd, making a survey. Surveys are important, I guess, but they are seldom very helpful. You can see Andrew and Philip there together. Philip says the money in the treasury won't feed them. Andrew says all he's found is a little lad with five barley loaves and two small fish. Remember, these five barley loaves were not big commercial loaves of bread or family loaves. They were more like a hamburger bun. They were just big enough to put with the fish. That's all this man Andrew could produce. It was a hopeless project -- "What are they among so many?"

And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand [[John 6:10](#)].

I would call your attention to the fact that there were five thousand men. I think a woman and one child with each man would be a reasonable estimate of the crowd, which would be fifteen thousand people. Now the Lord Jesus is going to feed that multitude. Here is something, I think, that is interesting to note. If you have fifteen thousand people to feed, that is certainly a liability. If you have five loaves and two fish and also the two hundred denarii, then, friend, these are your total assets. May I say that if a committee would have handed in a report with those assets and those liabilities, they would have said, "There's nothing you can do about it." Someone has called a committee a group of people who individually can do nothing, and collectively they can decide that nothing can be done. Or, a committee is a group of people who take down minutes and waste hours. So here is the committee report: to feed them would be impossible.

You see, what you need in this equation is what I call the mathematics of a miracle. You need Jesus. I tell you, if you have the five loaves plus the two fishes plus Jesus, then you've got something, friend. Without Him, you don't have anything at all.

Jesus told them to make the men sit down, and they sat down. Mark emphasizes the fact that they sat down by companies; that is, each of the groups of people which had come from a certain section sat down together. They may have been distinguished by robes of a certain color from their area. Everything that our Lord did was done decently and in order. Each little group was color on the background of green grass. I am of the opinion that if you could have been on the hill on the opposite side from where these people were sitting, you would have seen something that would have been as beautiful as a patchwork quilt. It would have been very orderly, because our Lord was doing it.

And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.

When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.

Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten [[John 6:11-13](#)].

As a student in a liberal college, I never shall forget how the professor explained away this miracle. What he said was that the disciples had gathered together these loaves and fishes ahead of time and had stored them up in a cave. Then the Lord Jesus just backed up to that cave, and the disciples just sort of slipped them out under His arm, concealed by a flowing robe! It was sort of like hocus-pocus, abracadabra. The only thing wrong with that explanation is that it won't work. You would have to have more faith to believe that than to believe it just like it is, my friend. To begin with, where would they find a bakery in that area that could provide that many loaves? And where would they get that many fish for this particular occasion at this time? We have no record that Andrew and Peter had been out fishing! This explanation is utterly preposterous and ridiculous, as you can see.

The obvious explanation is that a miracle was performed here. When you add Jesus to the side of the assets, you have more than enough. In fact, you have twelve baskets of

leftovers. That doesn't mean they were scraps. I used to think that a fellow would bite on a sandwich, then when he would see a bigger one, he would put the first one down and reach over and get the new sandwich so that the fragments were that which had been partially eaten. That's not true. There were twelve baskets of sandwiches that weren't even touched, my friend. Do you know what this means? It means that the crowd got all they wanted to eat. And people in that land and in that day were often hungry. There were many people in the crowd there that day who for the first time in their lives had their tummies filled. You see, when the Lord Jesus does anything, He does a good job of it.

Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did,  
said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the  
world.

When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take  
him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a  
mountain himself alone [[John 6:14-15](#)].

You see, they are following Him because He's a miracle worker. And I'm almost sure that He had to perform another miracle to get free from the crowd. The reason He got free from them was because they wanted to make Him a king. "Well," someone says, "isn't He a King?" Yes, it is true that He was born a King. But this is not the route by which He is coming to kingship.

### **Jesus Walks On The Water (6:16-21)**

And when even was now come, his disciples went down unto the  
sea,

And entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum.  
And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them.

And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew.

So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs,  
they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship:  
and they were afraid.

But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid.

Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the  
ship was at the land whither they went [[John 6:16-21](#)].

The other Gospels tell us that He hurried the disciples down to the Sea of Galilee and put them on a boat to go across while He went up into the mountain to pray. Since those mountains are about three thousand feet high, a storm from them will break suddenly upon the Sea of Galilee -- and this was a real storm! When they were twenty-five or thirty furlongs out on the sea, they were halfway across. It was in the middle of this inland sea that they saw Jesus walking on the water. They were afraid because they didn't recognize Him.

The same liberal professor who explained away the feeding of the five thousand tried to explain away this miracle too. He said the ship was at the land, so Jesus was actually walking on the shore -- but the disciples thought that He was walking on the water. May I

say that John had been a fisherman on this Sea of Galilee, and he knew it well. He specifically mentions their position in the lake so we would know they were not at the shore.

Jesus came to them in the storm. And that is a time He comes to His own today. He makes Himself more real to us in a time of trouble and sorrow. I don't know why He waits until midnight, until the waves are rolling, but perhaps that is the only time we will listen to Him. When the storms of life are beating upon our little bark, our hearts are ready for His presence.

"Immediately the ship was at the land whither they went." This may be another miracle, or John may mean that with no delay they reached the other side since the water was now calm. Or it may be the language of love -- with Him in the boat it didn't seem far to the other side.

### **Jesus Gives A Discourse On The Bread Of Life (6:22-71)**

We find now that the crowd is beginning to look for Him, and they are disappointed. They discover that both the Lord Jesus and the disciples are gone.

The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but that his disciples were gone away alone;

(Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks:)

When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus [[John 6:22-24](#)].

They apparently had come up from the southern part of the Sea of Galilee, and He had fed them there. Then they had come on by boat to Capernaum. That seems to be the way we have it here.

This is the first time John used the title Lord -- "After that the Lord had given thanks." As we have seen, the common name John uses for Him is Jesus because He is "the Word . . . made flesh" ([John 1:14](#)). Who is that Word? It is Jesus. ". . . thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins" ([Matt. 1:21](#)).

The crowd was really wanting to know how He had been able to get away as He did.

And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither?

Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled [[John 6:25-26](#)].

Jesus doesn't really answer their question directly. He penetrated beneath the surface to their motive for seeking Him. Actually, the word He used was not literally "loaves" but a

word that means fodder. You ate the fodder and were filled. Your only interest was that your tummies were full.

Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed [[John 6:27](#)].

Let me put this into our language of today (this is not a translation but only an attempt to bring out the meaning): stop working for food that perishes, but work for food that endures for everlasting life, which food the Son of Man will give you, for on Him, God the Father has set His seal.

You will recall that this is the same approach which our Lord made to the woman at the well. For her it was water that she wanted; for these folk it is bread. These are two essential things. Bread and water are very important to maintain life. Jesus is both Bread and Water. Notice that He uses these commonplace symbols. He is the Word, and the Word became flesh. How can we explain that? Jesus, the Word, is reaching down and communicating where we can understand it. He said that He is Water and that He gives Living Water. He said that He is Bread. We know what water is and we know what bread is.

Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? [[John 6:28](#)].

In other words, they are asking what they can do to be saved. Man has always felt that if he could just work at it, he could be saved. Man feels thoroughly capable of working out his own salvation. He feels competent to do it, and he feels that God must accept his works. Notice carefully what the work of God is.

Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent [[John 6:29](#)].

You see, the work of God is not that which is commanded by God, but it is that which has been wrought by God. In other words, it is what God has done and not what you do. It is the work of God and not the works of man. "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." He is saying that God provided food. He is the One who has provided that for us today, and we are to partake of it. The invitation He gives is to a banquet. Go out on the byways and highways and tell them they are invited to come. It is a free meal, by the way, but it happens to be spiritual food.

They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work? [[John 6:30](#)].

May I say that this reveals the hardness of the human heart. Here are the men who had been fed miraculously by our Lord when He fed the five thousand and they say, "Show us a sign. What dost Thou work?" In other words, they did not want to believe at all. And they take their conversation right back to the dinner table.

Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world [[John 6:31-33](#)].

They are still thinking of physical food, and say, "Moses gave our people manna." Actually it wasn't Moses who gave the manna; God did that. And it wasn't a one-time deal. God fed them every day for forty years. They want to be fed, and that is what they are after. Manna gave life in that day, and it was a gift from God. The manna gave physical life to them out there in the wilderness, but the Lord Jesus gives spiritual life. "My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven."

Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread [[John 6:34](#)].

They are just like the woman at the well who asked for water but was thinking of physical water so she wouldn't need to come and draw water at the well anymore. It took our Lord quite a while to lift her thinking out of that well to the spiritual Water. And it takes Him a long time to get these folk away from the dinner table and get them to see the spiritual Bread that gives spiritual life.

And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst [[John 6:35](#)].

He joins the two together. Christ is the manna. He is the One who came down from heaven and gave His life for the world that we might have life. That is salvation. We will also see that He is the Bread that we are to feed upon constantly so that we might grow spiritually. After all, manna was miracle food, and it was thrilling. When the children of Israel got into the Promised Land, they were given the "old corn of the land" which symbolizes the Word of God. Believe me, lots of people don't like the "old corn."

But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not.

All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out [[John 6:36-37](#)].

"You want bread? Well, I am the Bread of Life. But you have seen Me, and you do not believe. All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me; and him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out."

This thirty-seventh verse is a very important verse. There is a theological argument that rages today on election or free will. There are some people who put all their eggs in the basket of election. There are others who put all their eggs in the basket of free will. I'm not proposing to reconcile the two because I have discovered that I cannot. If you had met me the year that I entered seminary, or the year I graduated, I could have reconciled them for you. I never have been as smart as I was my first year and my last year in seminary. I knew it all then. I could reconcile election and free will, and it was a marvelous explanation. Now I've even forgotten what it was. It was pretty silly, if you want to know the truth.

Election and free will are both in this verse. "All that the father giveth me shall come to me" states a truth, and that is election. But wait a minute! "And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" is also true, and "him that cometh to me" is free will. I don't know how to reconcile them, but they are both true. The Father gives men to Christ, but men have to come. And the ones that come are the ones, apparently, whom the Father gives to Him. You and I are down here, and we don't see into the machinery of heaven. I don't know how God runs that computer of election, but I know that He has given to you and to me a free will and we have to exercise it.

Because Spurgeon preached a "whosoever will" gospel, someone said to him, "If I believed like you do about election, I wouldn't preach like you do." Spurgeon's answer was something like this, "If the Lord had put a yellow stripe down the backs of the elect, I'd go up and down the street lifting up shirttails, finding out who had the yellow stripe, and then I'd give them the gospel. But God didn't do it that way. He told me to preach the gospel to every creature that 'whosoever will may come.' " Jesus says, ". . . and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." So, my friend, you can argue about election all you want to, but you can come. And if you come, He'll not cast you out.

Someone may ask, "You mean that if I'm not the elect I can still come?" My friend, if you come, you will be the elect. How tremendous this is!

For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me [[John 6:38](#)].

How wonderful it is that the will of God is for you to come to Him. Jesus came down from heaven because "the Son of man must be lifted up." He came to do the Father's will in that, and it is the Father's will that you be born again. But you will have to come to Him, friend; that is the only way. You must come to the Lord Jesus by faith.

And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day [[John 6:39](#)].

The term predestination applies only to the saved. It means just exactly what He is saying here. When a person accepts Christ, he is justified; and just as surely as he is justified, he is going to be glorified. When Jesus starts out with one hundred sheep, He's going to come through with one hundred sheep. He will not lose one. That is what this means. Everyone who believes and receives Christ has everlasting life and will be raised up again at the last day.

The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven.

And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven? [[John 6:41-42](#)].

You see, He taught that He was God and that He came down from heaven. May I say to you, in this section here He is teaching His virgin birth. There are those who say the Lord Jesus never taught that He was virgin born. What do you think He is saying here, friend?



The Jews understood what He was saying. They asked how this could be when they knew His father and His mother. Well, it's by the virgin birth. As the angel told Mary, it was the Holy Spirit who conceived that "holy thing" in Mary (see [Luke 1:35](#)). This section right here (beginning with [v. 38](#)) is a complement or a counterpart of the virgin birth and needs to be added to the other portions of Scripture which deal with it. "I came down from heaven" -- that's the Christmas story. "Out of the ivory palaces into a world of woe." He came down from heaven's glory; He stepped down from the throne to ascend the Cross for you and for me. He did it by way of the virgin birth. You can have the jingle of bells and all the Ho, Ho, Hos -- but that is not Christmas. The virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ is the Christmas story.

They got the message immediately and asked, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph?" They thought they knew His father and His mother, but He is not the son of Joseph. He came down from heaven.

Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves.

No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day [[John 6:43-44](#)].

Actually, the word translated "draw" is drag. That is divine election. You ask me to explain it? I can't explain it at all, friend; I just know that you have a free will, and you can exercise it. God holds you responsible for it, and you know you are responsible. You know right now you can come or not come. It's up to you.

It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me [[John 6:45](#)].

There is Scripture after Scripture in the Old Testament that refers to this. For instance, [Isaiah 54:13](#): "And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children." [Isaiah 60:2-3](#): "For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." There are these statements that they will come to Him, and you can come to Him. These things are made so wonderfully clear. There are many references to it. [Malachi 4:2](#) is another: "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall to forth, and grow up as calves of the stall." Every man that listens to the Father and learns of Him will come to Me is what He is saying. You see, if you listen to the Word of God, then you'll come to Christ. That is where the great emphasis is being placed here.

Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life [[John 6:46-47](#)].

The One who has seen the Father is the Lord Jesus Christ. "He who believes on Me has everlasting life." It can't be said any more clearly.

I am that bread of life.

Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.

This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world [[John 6:48-51](#)].

He came down to this earth: "the Word was made flesh" ([John 1:14](#)). He is going to the Cross to lay that human life down there as a sacrifice to pay for your sins and my sins. Friend, when you partake of that, that is, when you accept that, you are saved. Someone may say, "Oh, that's so vivid and so strong." That's what they said in that day, too.

The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? [[John 6:52](#)].

They were thinking of His literal flesh, of course.

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you [[John 6:53](#)].

That means to partake of Him spiritually, which is more real than a physical partaking.

Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever [[John 6:54-58](#)].

Friend, this is an amazing statement. Our Lord is preparing these men for that Last Supper and the institution of the Lord's Supper. This, obviously, is something that is not to be taken literally because He was right there before them. He is not saying for them to begin to eat Him and to drink His blood! What He is saying is that He is going to give His life. In that Upper Room He made it very clear that the blood is the symbol of life. "For the life of the flesh is in the blood . . . ([Lev. 17:11](#)). God had taught the Israelites that truth from the very beginning when He called them out of the land of Egypt. There at Mount Sinai Moses gives them this great axiom, "the life of the flesh is in the blood," which is also medically true, by the way. The life of the flesh is in the blood. And Jesus is

giving His life. He will shed His blood upon the Cross and give His life. Salvation is by accepting and receiving Him in a most intimate way.

This is the basis for the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Friend, there has been just as much disagreement among believers in the churches down through the ages over the interpretation of the Lord's Supper as there has been over baptism. I don't think they have fought over it quite as much, but the disagreement is there.

Hoc est meus corpus -- "This is my body." When He gave them the bread at the supper in the Upper Room, He said, ". . . This is my body . . ." ([Luke 22:19](#)). Now there have been different emphases put on that.

The Roman Catholic Church puts the emphasis upon this. This is My body. They say that transubstantiation takes place, that the bread becomes the flesh of Christ. Well, I don't think our Lord taught cannibalism in any form, shape, or fashion. I think, of course, that it is a wrong emphasis. Then there are those who have taken the position of the Lutheran church, which is consubstantiation. This means that by, with, in, through, and under the bread you get the body of Christ. Again, may I say, I think that falls short of what our Lord really means. Then there are those who take Zwingli's position. He was the Swiss Reformation leader who gave it a spiritual interpretation. He felt it was just a symbol, just a religious ritual, and that is all. I think that is probably the interpretation that most of Protestantism gives to it today. Frankly, I feel that falls as far short of the interpretation of the Lord's Supper as the other two do. Calvin put the emphasis on is -- "This is my body." The Reformed faith has always put the emphasis there, and the early church put the emphasis there. The bread is bread, and it always will be bread. It cannot be changed. The wine is always just what it is, and there is no miracle that takes place there. You don't get the body of Christ by going through the ritual. And yet, it is more than a ritual. I had a seminary professor who taught us that in the Lord's Supper it is bread in your mouth, but it is Christ in your heart. Friend, I believe that there is a spiritual blessing that comes in observing the Lord's Supper. I think that He ministers to you spiritually through your obedience in observing the Lord's Supper. There is no such thing as a hocus-pocus there. Nor is it just an idle ritual that we go through. It is meaningful, and it has a spiritual blessing for the heart.

I think that is what our Lord is saying to them here. An intimate, real relationship with Him is the important thing. When they ate manna in the wilderness, it was only a temporary thing. Jesus has something that is eternal -- life which is eternal. We are told that at the beginning of this Gospel, "In him was life; and the life was the light of men" ([John 1:4](#)).

These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.

Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said,  
This is an hard saying; who can hear it?

When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he  
said unto them, Doth this offend you?

What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was  
before?

It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life [[John 6:59-63](#)].

There was definite reaction to what Jesus had said and differences of opinion. Jesus tells them that they are not going to eat Him literally because He is going back to heaven. It is the Spirit that makes alive; the flesh profits nothing. So obviously, friend, He is not talking about His literal body. We are to appropriate the Lord's Supper by faith. The juice in the cup is sweet, and I always taste the sweetness, remembering that He bore the bitter cup for me on the Cross so that I might have this sweet cup. That sweet cup is to remind me that He shed His blood for me, and there is a spiritual blessing there.

"The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." During my ministry, I have always read to the congregation from the Word of God during the Lord's Supper. I find that the Word of God ministers to the hearts of the people. Why? Because the words of the Lord Jesus are spirit and they are life.

But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.

And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father [[John 6:64-65](#)].

But remember now, you have to put with that "whosoever will may come." It's up to you, you see.

From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him [[John 6:66](#)].

You can see that in the group there that day were the hostile leaders, the religious leaders. Also there was an undesignated number of disciples in addition to the Twelve. And in the twelve was Judas. So you actually find four opinions concerning Him at this time. Many of these disciples -- not the Twelve -- but many of the other disciples turned and went back.

Then said Jesus unto the twelve, will ye also go away?

Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life [[John 6:67-68](#)].

This is a marvelous statement on the part of Simon Peter. And the question he asks is pertinent to us today. If you say that the Lord Jesus is not a Savior to you and that He doesn't meet your needs at all, then may I ask you where you are going? I saw a group of young people on the island of Maui, out in the Hawaiian Islands. They had a picture of Krishna in front of them, and they were going over and over a monotonous song. Poor little folk! They weren't finding any satisfaction in that. What disillusionment is coming to so many today! There are those who are turning in every direction for light. Let me ask you the question of Simon Peter: "To whom shall we go?" The Lord Jesus is the One, and the only One, who has the Words of eternal life.

And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

Jesus answered them, Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?

He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve [[John 6:69-71](#)].

This man, Judas Iscariot, is really a great mystery. Here our Lord numbers him with the twelve, and He said that He had chosen him. Yet he was a demon, which probably means demon-possessed, and this is the man who is going to betray Him. All the way through our Lord gave him every opportunity to make a decision for Him. It is difficult to interpret evil like this, friend. It is one of the mysteries.

Evil is always a mystery, which is one of the things that makes it so attractive. Suppose right now I would say to you that I am holding two sticks. One stick is perfectly straight because it is a ruler. You can easily imagine how that ruler looks because it can be straight only one way. Then suppose that I say that I am also holding in my hand a crooked stick. I'm of the opinion that if each of you drew a picture of how you think that stick looks, everyone would draw it differently. That's because it can be crooked in a million different ways. You see, evil has a mystery to it. I must confess that, as this man Judas Iscariot walks across the pages of Scripture, it's difficult to interpret him. And here our Lord says this amazing thing about him: he is a demon!

What a contrast is the testimony of Simon Peter -- "we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."

## Chapter 7

**THEME:** Jesus teaches at Feast of Tabernacles in temple (fifth word)

This chapter contains the wonderful truths that Jesus is the Water of Life and that He promises to give the Holy Spirit to those who believe on Him.

### **Jesus Teaches At Feast Of Tabernacles In Temple (fifth Word) (7:1-53)**

After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him [[John 7:1](#)].

"After these things." This is a common expression with John who is giving us a chronological picture. The events of chapter 6 took place in Galilee at the Sea of Galilee; but before that, Jesus had been in Jerusalem where there had arisen the controversy concerning Him at the pool of Bethesda. It seems that the events of chapter 6 transpired about one year before the Cross in April; the events in chapter 7 occur about six months later, in October. [Matthew 15](#) -- [Matthew 18](#) and [Mark 7](#) -- [Mark 9](#) and [Luke 9](#) relate incidents which transpired during this period.

During the last year of His ministry, Jesus confined His activities to Galilee. It says that He walked no longer in Jewry, that means in Judaea, because the religious rulers there

had a plot to kill Him. Jesus is following a divine schedule which His Father had given Him. These men could not touch Him until His time was come. We are now entering the last six months of His life, and the first incident which John records in that period is this occurrence of the Feast of Tabernacles.

[Verse 1](#) reveals that a storm is gathering about the person of Christ. Six months later that storm will break in all its fury upon Jesus on the Cross. Friend, that storm is still going on. There is more difference of opinion about Him than about any other person who has ever lived. They blaspheme Him and say the worst things about Him that ever have been said. He's controversial today.

Although the storm is gathering, Jesus chose this time to abandon His method of staying away, and He went up to Jerusalem because it was the Feast of Tabernacles.

Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand [[John 7:2](#)].

There were three feasts which every male Jew was required to attend in Jerusalem. Our Lord kept the Law; He had to go up to Jerusalem during the Feasts of Passover, Tabernacles, and Pentecost. The Feast of Tabernacles is described in [Leviticus 23](#). This was a feast of great joy to celebrate Israel's wonderful deliverance out of the land of Egypt. Because they had lived in tents during the wilderness journey, this is a feast of tents, or booths. They didn't have campers, you see, but they did camp out in booths. There was the blowing of trumpets and seventy bullocks were offered. There was the pouring out of water in the temple, with a double portion on the last day of the feast to remind them that God gave them water from the rock in the wilderness. They brought the water from the pool of Siloam and poured out literally barrels of water. During this festival, they illuminated the inner court with a regular torch parade. This was commemorating the pillar of fire that guided the children of Israel by night as they wandered in the wilderness. Now we can understand that the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire that led the children of Israel were both pictures of our Lord Jesus Christ.

All the feasts of Jehovah in the Old Testament have been fulfilled except the Feast of Tabernacles. This will be fulfilled when our Lord returns to the earth. Thus it symbolizes the great joy of that time.

His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest.

For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world.

For neither did his brethren believe in him [[John 7:3-5](#)].

These brethren are not His disciples but are His half-brothers. Their names are given to us in [Matthew 13:55](#): James, Joses, Simon, and Judas. His half-brother, James, is the one who wrote the Epistle of James; His half-brother, Judas, probably is the one who wrote the Epistle of Jude. That was much later, of course, and at this point His brothers do not believe in Him. They are giving Him advice that He can't use at all.

Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is alway ready [[John 7:6](#)].

They are advising Jesus out of their unbelief, but Jesus does not take their advice. He is moving according to schedule, but it is His Father's schedule. He is not following the wisdom of the world, nor did He ever appeal to His own mind -- it isn't that He doesn't think it is the right time to go. He is on a definite schedule from the Father; He is doing His Father's will.

Notice the little word yet in "My time is not yet come." Jesus did not say that He would not go down to the feast, but He was not going down with them publicly to win public favor by something spectacular, or whatever they wanted Him to do. He would go at His Father's appointed time and in His Father's way.

The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.

Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come.

When he had said these words unto them, he abode still in Galilee [[John 7:7-9](#)].

The world is hostile to Christ. The reason is that our Lord Jesus Christ is the Light of the World. He turns on that Light, and that Light reveals everything that is wrong; it reveals sin. He condemns sin. That is the reason He is hated even today. He condemns sin by His very presence, by His very life. This raises a hostility in man because the heart of man is evil. Christ went to the Cross because He loved the human family. Redeeming love is what has broken the heart of hostile man.

We see this so clearly in the life of Saul of Tarsus. He was breathing out threatenings. He hated the Lord Jesus and anyone who followed Him. But when he came to know the Lord Jesus as his Savior, it broke his heart, and he could say, "He loved me, and gave himself for me" (see [Gal. 3:20](#)).

But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret [[John 7:10](#)].

He probably traveled with His disciples on a back road and entered into the city through the sheep gate. I believe He always entered Jerusalem through the sheep gate until the time of His so-called triumphal entry when He appeared publicly, offering Himself to the nation and actually demanding that they either accept or reject Him.

Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he?

And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people.

Howbeit no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews [[John 7:11-13](#)].



The "Jews" are the religious rulers -- they were looking for Him and expecting Him because the Law required that He come to the feast. There was a lot of discussion concerning Him, but it was all done quite secretly because anyone would be attacked for making any statement that would be inclined in His favor and would be in danger of arrest.

Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught [[John 7:14](#)].

Quite suddenly, He appeared in the temple. This Feast of Tabernacles is in the calendar of God and sets before us the coming of Christ in His return to earth and the events and stages which lead up to that. This feast speaks of the consummation of all things. He will appear suddenly. ". . . and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple . . ." ([Mal. 3:1](#)). This will be fulfilled in His return to the earth.

And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? [[John 7:15](#)].

Have you noticed how often we find Jesus teaching? Note the priority which He gave to the Word of God. The Jews (these would be the religious leaders) were astounded because He had no formal training in the rabbinical schools. They marveled that He could speak as He did. Even His enemies were forced to admit, "Never man spake like this man" ([v. 46](#)).

Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me [[John 7:16](#)].

To reject the message of Jesus is to reject the message of God. In chapters 4 and 5, He has insisted that to reject Him is to reject God. Don't ever tell me that He didn't make Himself equal with God. You may reject that He is, but you can never say that the Bible does not declare Him to be equal with God.

If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself [[John 7:17](#)].

"If anyone is willing to do His will" is the way Weymouth translates this. The Old Testament invites, "O taste and see that the LORD is good . . ." ([Ps. 34:8](#)). We have an adage that says, "The proof of the pudding is in the eating of it." Jesus invites you; come and make a laboratory test. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine." There must be an attitude of love for the Word of God. Someone has said that human knowledge must be known to be loved, but divine knowledge must be loved to be understood. Here we have the steps: knowledge, love, obedience. That is what He asks you to do.

It's so easy to sit on the sidelines and be a Monday morning quarterback. We love to tell others how it should have been done or to speak our mind without really knowing. Jesus says, "Taste the Lord!" "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." That is the wonder of the Word of God. Friend, if you are willing, God will make it real to you. The Holy Spirit will confirm it to you.

He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him [[John 7:18](#)].

The question is whether men want to hear God. If they do, then God will speak to them in His Word. Then they will accept Jesus Christ who came to speak for the Father. Unfortunately, men are often more interested in a man who is seeking his own glory. If Jesus Christ had been trying to found some new cult, these men would have listened. But Jesus was not glorifying Himself; rather, He was giving all the glory to the Father and so "... the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" ([1Cor. 2:14](#)). Therefore, some people read the Bible and get nothing out of it.

Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me? [[John 7:19](#)].

Here is the hypocrisy of the legalist, the person who says the Sermon on the Mount is his religion or the person who says he lives by the Ten Commandments. The Lord Jesus says, "none of you keepeth the law." The Law is a mirror to let us see that we are lost sinners. The Law is important -- don't misunderstand me -- you don't kick the Law out the door. It expresses the will of God. But the purpose of the Law is to show us that we are sinners and that we need a Savior. The Law is a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ (see [Gal. 3:24](#)).

The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee?

Jesus answered and said unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel [[John 7:20-21](#)].

Possibly they did not realize that there was a plot to put Jesus to death. Jesus refers to His work when He healed the man at the pool of Bethesda. This had aroused antagonism.

Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers;) and ye on the sabbath day circumcise a man.

If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day?

Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment [[John 7:22-24](#)].

Circumcision is a rite which goes back to Abraham and is older than the Mosaic Law. He is showing them their own inconsistency in their practice. In trying to keep the Law, they broke the Law. If a child was eight days old on the Sabbath Day, they would break the Sabbath Law and circumcise the child. They have no reply to this! Then Jesus warns them against making superficial judgments. That is still a difficulty with most of us today. We make superficial judgments because we don't have all the facts.

Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this he, whom they seek to kill?

But, lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ?

Howbeit we know this man whence he is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is [[John 7:25-27](#)].

Again we note that there was a division concerning who Jesus is.

Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not.

But I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me [[John 7:28-29](#)].

This is quite oratorical. Jesus is saying, "Do you really know Me? You think you know Me; you see Me, but you don't really know Me. You think you know where I have come from, but you don't really know."

Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come [[John 7:30](#)].

It's interesting that even though they were anxious to take Jesus, they couldn't touch Him until His hour had come.

And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?

The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him; and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him.

Then said Jesus unto them, Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me.

Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come [[John 7:31-34](#)].

Our Lord answered the Pharisees that they would take Him at the proper time -- not until then. Then He tells them He will leave them. He is speaking of His resurrection and His ascension. They would never be able to touch Him again. Have you ever noticed that after His death upon the Cross, none but loving hands touched Him? None but loving eyes saw Him.

Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles?

What manner of saying is this that he said, Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come? [[John 7:35-36](#)].

I think this is ridicule. They didn't think that Jesus could hide from them.

We come now to the last day of the feast, and it was on that day that they poured out a double portion of water in the temple. I think He could have been standing ankle deep in water when He said these words. They were celebrating the fact that God had given them water from the rock during the long trek of Israel through the wilderness. Paul tells us that the rock was Christ (see [1Cor. 10:4](#)). He is the One who gives the real water, the Water of Life.

In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink [[John 7:37](#)].

This is free will, friend. "If any man." That means you. God is offering a gift to you. Also here is election: "If any man thirst." The question is, "Are you thirsty?" Have you perhaps been drinking at the mud holes of the world, and have you been finding that they are not satisfying? "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." You can come to Him and receive Him as your Savior.

He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.) [[John 7:38-39](#)].

The Holy Spirit had not yet been given because Jesus was not yet glorified. The Holy Spirit did not come until the Day of Pentecost. Then He came to indwell believers and to form them into one body. The coming of the Holy Spirit on that day assures us that Jesus had arrived back at the Father's throne.

Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet [[John 7:40](#)].

Some of the people believed and turned to Him. They drank and were satisfied.

Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? [[John 7:41](#)].

We have the same thing today. Some believe, and some do not believe.

Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?

So there was a division among the people because of him [[John 7:42-43](#)].

He was of the seed of David and out of the town of Bethlehem. That was where He first touched down on this earth. It was "splashdown" for Him in that miserable little stable in that miserable little town. It's not like the pretty pictures you see on Christmas cards. He began in Bethlehem, but He didn't stay there for His earthly ministry. If these people had really wanted to know, they could have learned that His birth took place in Bethlehem and that He did fulfill the prophecies. He is the One who is giving them the invitation to come and drink, but they put up this objection. There will always be a division among the people over who He is until He comes to reign.

And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him [[John 7:44](#)].

They couldn't. His hour was not yet come.

Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him?

The officers answered, Never man spake like this man [[John 7:45-46](#)].

What a testimony these men gave about Jesus, "Never man spake like this man." He was the great teacher, but it is not by His teaching that we are saved. He saves us by His death and resurrection.

Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived?

Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?

But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed.

Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,)

Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?

They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.

And every man went unto his own house [[John 7:47-53](#)].

This is the Nicodemus who came to Jesus by night. I think that Nicodemus trusted the Lord that night. He is a Pharisee, and he defends Jesus. They ridicule him with a joke, "Art thou also of Galilee?" That was a disgrace to them. It was like city folk making fun of the country folk. It is interesting to note that they did know the facts of their Scripture: "Out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." In the true sense He hadn't come out of Galilee, nor had He come out of Bethlehem. He had come out of glory. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given" ([Isa. 9:6](#)) -- the Son came out from heaven.

"Every man went unto his own house." No one invited Jesus into his home. It was a feast night, but Jesus went out to the Mount of Olives. As far as we know, He never spent a night in Jerusalem.

How about you, my friend? Do you go to your own home and leave Jesus out in the cold? Or have you accepted His wonderful invitation so that you live in the love and light of His presence?

## Chapter 8

**THEME:** Jesus in temple forgives woman taken in adultery (sixth word)

The chapter opens with the episode of the woman taken in adultery. John uses his customary method of following an incident with a discourse. There was a sharp conflict between our Lord and the religious rulers relative to this woman and what should be done with her. Arising from this came the marvelous discourse on Jesus the Light of the World.

The episode of the woman, covering the first eleven verses, is not found in some of the better manuscripts. As I am sure you know, our English Bibles are translated from the original languages. The New Testament was first written in the Greek language. Extant manuscripts were used to compile a Greek New Testament; then our English translations were made from that. The Greek text of Westcott and Hort omits the incident of the woman taken in adultery from its position in the eighth chapter of John but inserts it at the end of that Gospel. Nestle's Greek text includes it but encloses it in brackets. Augustine writes that it was omitted because of a prudish fear that it would encourage adultery. However, if we read the account carefully, we will see that it does not condone sin. Rather, it condemns sin. We have both a scholarly and moral basis for considering it part of the inspired Word of God.

### **Jesus In Temple Forgives Woman Taken In Adultery (sixth Word) (8:1-11)**

Jesus went unto the mount of Olives.

And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them [[John 8:1-2](#)].

Remember that the night before there had been a meeting of the Sanhedrin and that people were divided in their opinion as to whether or not Jesus was the Messiah. Nicodemus defended Him. Everyone had gone home, and not one had invited Jesus to his house. Early in the morning, He came back into Jerusalem, went back to the temple, and sat down to teach.

And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst,

They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act [[John 8:3-4](#)].

What could be more crude and rude and brutal than this act of these religious rulers? As our Lord was sitting in the temple area teaching the people, there is a hullabaloo outside. Then here come these religious rulers dragging a woman with her clothes in disarray, her hair all disheveled, defiant, and resisting them. The crowd would naturally turn and look to see what in the world was happening. The religious rulers bring her right into the midst of the group that the Lord Jesus is teaching! They fling her down on the ground there and make their crude charge. "This woman was taken in adultery, in the very act."

She is guilty, there is no doubt about that. And what she did was sin. Our Lord called it sin -- He finally said to her, "Go, and sin no more." They knew the Law perfectly well: "And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to

death" ([Lev. 20:10](#)). Where was the man? The very fact that they did not produce the man also makes it apparent that they were not interested in enforcing the Law. They had another motive.

Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned:  
but what sayest thou?

This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him.  
But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground,  
as though he heard them not [[John 8:5-6](#)].

They are right about the Law of Moses; there is no way of toning it down. She should be stoned. They are putting Him on the horns of a dilemma. Will He contradict Moses? Will he say something else, offer some other explanation? They did this to trap Him so that they might accuse Him. They didn't really want to stone the woman. They wanted to stone Him. Our Lord knew that, of course -- He "needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man" ([John 2:25](#)).

This scene is very interesting. The defiant woman is flung before Him. The crowd has no respect for her embarrassment, her feelings, and they leer at her and crane their necks to see her, adding to her humiliation.

Jesus stoops and writes on the ground. In effect, He dismisses the case. He will not join with her accusers. He will not so much as look at her to add to her embarrassment. He stoops down and writes as though He doesn't even hear them.

This is the only record that we have of His writing anything. He is the One about whom more books have been written, pro and con, than about any other person who has ever lived; yet He never wrote anything except this in the sands of the temple floor, which the wind or the feet of the crowd erased.

What did He write? Of course we don't know, but I can make a suggestion. Turning back to the prophets, we pick up something quite interesting: "O LORD, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living waters" ([Jer. 17:13](#)). Now, who had forsaken the Lord? This woman? Yes, she had. The religious rulers? Yes, they had. Their names shall be written in the earth. This is what I think He wrote, linking their names with sins of their past. Perhaps He wrote the name of a woman living in Rome. One old pious Pharisee had had an affair in Rome when he was a young fellow. His wife didn't know about it; no one in Jerusalem knew about it; but our Lord knew that old rascal. As He just wrote the name of the woman, the old Pharisee came over and saw it -- and suddenly remembered that he had another appointment. Perhaps one of the scribes made regular trips to Ephesus, a great sinning place, to a certain address over there which Jesus wrote in the sand. The scribe looked at it and said, "Oh, my gracious!" He left hurriedly. Another scribe may have left a girl in Galilee who was pregnant. He didn't marry her, and he didn't think anyone knew. Our Lord wrote the name of the girl and the scribe's name with it.

"Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance" ([Ps. 90:8](#)). Secret sin on earth is open scandal in heaven.



So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.

And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.

And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst [[John 8:7-9](#)].

Jesus gives the requirements for being a judge, which is something for all of us to hear. We have the right to be the judge of others provided we meet the requirement. That requirement is sinlessness. May I say to you, my friend, I don't know about you, but that takes me out of the stone-throwing business.

An old Scottish commentator says that the elder ones left first because they had more sense than the younger ones. The younger ones hung around until they saw their own names come up, and then they finally caught on and left also. So there was not a person left there who could throw a stone at her except One. Only Jesus could have thrown the stone at her. All the others had slinked away. What hypocrites they were!

When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?

She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more [[John 8:10-11](#)].

This woman was guilty of sin, and according to the Law of Moses an adulteress was to be put to death. Is Jesus reversing the Mosaic system? No. He is placing His Cross between that woman and her sin. This One who is the Son of the virgin, who Himself was under a cloud all of His life, is going to the Cross to pay the penalty for even the sin of this woman. He did not come into the world to condemn the world. He did not come to judge this woman. He came into the world to be a Savior!

A great many people think they are lost because they have committed a certain sin. I have news for you. One is not lost because he is a murderer, or a liar, or a thief, or an adulterer, or because he has borne false witness or committed other sins. A person does these things because he is lost and does not believe in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ forgives sins. He is the Savior. He died for the sins of the whole world. Any person who comes to the Lord Jesus Christ is forgiven.

### **Jesus Is The Light Of The World (sixth Word) (8:12-59)**

We notice that Jesus often follows this method. After an incident or a miracle, He gives a discourse on that subject.

Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life [[John 8:12](#)].

Notice He says, "I am" -- this "I am" occurs again and again. In the Old Testament, Jehovah is the ". . . I AM THAT I AM . . ." ([Exod. 3:14](#)). Very frankly, we are told very little about God. We know He is the self-existing One, that He has all wisdom and all power. The Lord Jesus came to this earth not only to redeem man but also to reveal God to man. Jesus greatly expands our understanding by using the commonplace things like bread, light, and water to symbolize Himself. He uses the ordinary to speak of the extraordinary, the physical to speak of the spiritual, the temporal to speak of the eternal, the here-and-now to speak of the hereafter, the earthly to speak of the heavenly, the limited to speak of the unlimited, and the finite to speak of the infinite. Jesus gives us a revelation of God when He tells us that He is Bread, He is Water, He is Life. Then we understand that not only is God self-existing, but that He also meets our every need. Jesus said, "I am the bread of life" ([John 6:35](#)), "I am the light of the world" ([John 8:12](#)), "I am the door" ([John 10:9](#)), "I am the good shepherd" ([John 10:11](#)), "I am the resurrection, and the life" ([John 11:25](#)), "I am the way, the truth, and the life" ([John 14:6](#)), and "I am the vine, ye are the branches" ([John 15:5](#)).

Here Jesus is saying, "I am the light of the world." He has just exposed the sin of the scribes and the Pharisees who brought the woman guilty of adultery. Because they were just as guilty as she, they had to flee. When one turns on the light, all the rats, the bats, and the bedbugs crawl away. Light exposes sin, which is the reason the scribes and the Pharisees had to leave.

"I am the light of the world" is the highest claim that He has made so far in the Gospel of John. One of the definitions of God is that He is Light (see [1John 1:5](#)). He is absolute in His holiness and in His justice. Even physical light is one of the most complicated things as well as one of the most essential things for us. Who really knows what it is? In some ways it acts like waves, and in some ways it acts like particles of matter. The startling thing is that men, acting on both of these definitions or principles, have been able to make remarkable inventions and discoveries. Some say that both are true and yet others say both can't be true. Is light the absence of darkness? Is darkness the absence of light? We say a room is filled with light. What do we mean? Does it weigh any more when it is filled with light? There could be no such thing as color without light. The red rose is red because it has absorbed every other part of light except red. That is the reason we see red in the red rose.

We don't understand light, and certainly a child doesn't understand light, but he does know enough about it to turn on the light switch when he enters a dark room. Jesus Christ is the Light of the World. Just as the sun is the physical light of this world, He is spiritual Light. Just as a little child can have enough sense to come into the presence of light, so any sinner today, though he be "a fool and a wayfaring man" (see [Isa. 35:8](#)), can come into the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There are those who deny that Christ is the Light of the World. They are walking in a lesser light. As the moon has no light of its own but reflects light from the sun, so this civilization that we live in today owes everything to Christ. We have hospitals, charities, orphans' homes, consideration for the poor, rights of labor because the Lord Jesus came to this earth. The reason we have problems in these areas today is that we have wandered

too far from the Light. The world is just walking in moonlight, as it were. How this poor old world needs to get back to the Light which is Christ.

"He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." There are those who have attempted to liken Jesus the Light to the headlights of a car. Friend, the headlights of a car do not lead anywhere. Who does the leading? -- The fellow at the steering wheel. Unfortunately, this is the way many Christians try to live their lives. I don't consider this an apt illustration of Christ.

During this Feast of Tabernacles, Israel was remembering the deliverance when the pillar of fire led the children of Israel through the wilderness. They were celebrating this with a torch parade. When Jesus said, "I am the light of the world," this is what He was referring to. Whenever and wherever the pillar of fire led, the children of Israel followed. We are to follow Him in like manner, looking to Him as the Light of the World.

The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true.

Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go [[John 8:13-14](#)].

There is now a sharp conflict between the religious rulers and Christ. They are really accusing Him of boasting when He claimed to be the Light. Jesus gives them a threefold reason why His testimony is true.

First, He says, "I know whence I came." He says He knows where He came from and, hence, He knows Himself. By the way, folk on this earth can't tell you where they came from. Scientists try to tell us what has happened millions of years ago; yet none of them were here even one hundred years ago. They don't know where they came from; they can only speculate. But the Lord Jesus knew from where He came.

Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man.

And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me [[John 8:15-16](#)].

His second statement is that He judges no man after the flesh. Any judgment that you or I make is after the flesh. Our judgment is limited because we simply do not have all the facts. The theory of evolution is an example of this. Because our judgments are based on very fragmentary facts, they really are speculation. Either man accepts speculation or he accepts revelation. If one judges according to the flesh, he will naturally follow speculation. The Lord Jesus says that He does not judge according to the flesh. He gives the judgment that comes from heaven. He gives God's viewpoint, God's estimation. This is revelation, and it differs from man's point of view. That is why the hostility of these religious rulers is mounting.

It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true.

I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me [[John 8:17-18](#)].

Here is the third reason that His testimony is true. The Father had borne witness to Him. They had heard the Father's voice out of heaven.

Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also [[John 8:19](#)].

They are reflecting on His birth again. Notice that Jesus calls God "my Father" in a different relationship from what you and I have with Him through faith in Christ. Remember, He said to Mary after His resurrection, "I ascend unto my Father, and your Father" ([John 20:17](#)). We become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ, but Jesus is His Son because of His position in the Trinity. He is God the Son, and He addresses God the Father. This has nothing to do with generation or regeneration, but it has everything to do with His position in the Trinity.

"If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also." Here is the cleavage. Here is the real issue. There is no middle ground. If you are going to know God the Father, you must come through Jesus Christ. There is no other way.

These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come.

Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come.

Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come [[John 8:20-22](#)].

The treasury was in the women's court. This was where they had brought the woman taken in adultery. You will notice how much these Jews were in the dark. First they ask, "Where is thy Father?" Now they ask, "Will he kill himself?" They know nothing about the fact that He has been instructing His own that He is going to Jerusalem to die at the hands of the Gentiles, that He will be delivered up to die by these very same religious rulers, and that He will die a redemptive death for the sins of the world. Will He kill Himself? No! He will give Himself a ransom for many.

And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world [[John 8:23](#)].

We find this same thought in [1Corinthians 2:14](#). Human knowledge can be understood by any other man who has a human nature -- if his IQ is high enough. But divine knowledge is different. Only the Spirit of God can take the things of Christ and show them to us. That's what He is saying here.

I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins [[John 8:24](#)].

People die because they are sinners. That is the natural consequence of sin. "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." Can a person be saved on his deathbed? Yes, if he accepts the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior. But a person can reject Christ too long,

just as these Jews did. There comes a time when one has rejected Christ too long and then will not ever want to accept Him.

Then said they unto him, Who art thou? And Jesus saith unto them, Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning [[John 8:25](#)].

These Jews did not know what His mission was, His work was, nor did they know Him. "Where is thy Father?" "Will He kill Himself?" "Who art Thou?" Jesus answers that His statement concerning Himself is always the same. He consistently claims that He is the Messiah, the Savior of the world.

I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him [[John 8:26](#)].

Our Lord always maintained that what He was doing and saying was what the Father wanted Him to do and say. He claimed that God the Father had sent Him and that He was doing the Father's will. He never appealed to His own mind or His own intellect. This is an example for us who are preachers. It is God's Word that we are to be giving out rather than messages that are the product of our own intellects.

They understood not that he spake to them of the Father [[John 8:27](#)].

They missed the whole point. They are of the earth; they do not understand heavenly things.

Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things [[John 8:28](#)].

When Jesus calls Himself the Son of Man, He is referring to [Daniel 7:13-14](#). The Son of Man comes to the Ancient of Days to be made ruler of this universe. So the Lord Jesus is referring here to His crucifixion and also to His crowning that is yet to come.

After the death and resurrection of Christ, many of these religious rulers believed. We are told in the Book of Acts that many of the priests in Jerusalem believed. This is what He is saying to them now. Afterwards they would know that He is the One He claims to be. It is the redemptive death of Christ that explains Him, why He came and who He is. One cannot really know who He is until one knows what He has done.

And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.

As he spake these words, many believed on him [[John 8:29-30](#)].

Have you ever finished a day without looking back on it and wishing that you had done some things a little differently? Our Lord never finished a day with a regret. He always did those things that pleased His Father. He is making it abundantly clear that He has come to do the Father's will.

Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;

And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free [[John 8:31-32](#)].

Faith alone saves, but the faith that saves is not alone. It will produce something. After a person believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, he will want to "continue in His Word." The proof of faith is continuing with the Savior. As the pastor of a church, I learned to watch out for the person who is active in the church but is not interested in the study of the Word of God. Such a one is dangerous to a church.

The truth shall make you free. The truth is that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world. He is the Truth. First we come to Him as our Savior. Then as we go on with Him, we know by experience that we are free. We are free from the penalty of sin -- we don't need to lie awake at night worrying about going to hell. He doesn't even ask us to live the Christian life. He asks us to trust Him and let Him live His life through us. When we yield to Him, we are free.

They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? [[John 8:33](#)].

They lied when they said that. They had been in bondage in Egypt and in Babylon, and as they spoke, they were under the iron heel of Rome. What a misrepresentation that was.

Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.

And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.

If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.

I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father [[John 8:34-38](#)].

They were not free physically, and they were not free spiritually. They claimed to be Abraham's seed; yet they sought to kill Jesus.

"Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin" is in the present tense. If you continue in a life of sin, you are a servant of sin. I doubt if any of us go through one day without sinning, but the child of God comes to the Father every day and confesses his sin. The child of the Devil will never do that. This is the thought of [Romans 6:16](#), "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey . . . ?"

Jesus gets rather subtle now. A servant may come and work for you during the day, but when evening comes, he gets his hat and goes home. The son comes in, pitches his hat in a corner, sits down and relaxes because he is the son. The Lord was telling these rulers

that they are not really God's children. They were in the temple then, but they wouldn't be there long. In B.C. 70 Titus came and took every one of them away and sold them into slavery. The five o'clock whistle had blown, and the servants left the house.

The Son makes us free indeed. We do not have to be the servant of sin. Many Christians accept defeat and failure as a normal Christian life. God never intended us to live like that. He intends us to live for Him by the power of the Holy Spirit.

They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.

But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham.

Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.

Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.

Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word.

Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it [[John 8:39-44](#)].

The old adage says, "Like father, like son." Although they claim that they are the children of Abraham, Jesus tells these men that if they were truly the children of Abraham, they would act like Abraham. Instead, they are trying to kill Him. So instead of being the children of Abraham, they are, in fact, the children of the Devil. Satan is the originator of murder and of lying, and they were being his imitators, his children. "Ye do the deeds of your father."

Notice that they again bring up the subject, "We be not born of fornication." When I first entered the ministry, I took the position that one could deny the virgin birth and still be a Christian. I don't do so today. If we deny the virgin birth of Christ, I believe we are joining this taunting crowd who said, "We be not born of fornication." Yet, this crowd want to claim that God is their Father. Jesus says, "If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me."

How do we know that God is our Father? John, in his epistle, gives us this answer: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him" ([1John 5:1](#)).

These Jews thought they were the children of God when they were actually the children of the Devil. We find the same idea today. This doctrine of the universal fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of man has brought us into a lot of trouble. It has



shaped the philosophy of our nation. We sit down at a conference table with the children of the Devil, and we call them the children of God. I am afraid that our nation has been deceived by other nations of the world because our wise diplomats and smart politicians are simply working on the wrong premise. The Bible does not teach the universal fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of man. Obviously Jesus did not teach the universal fatherhood of God because He was saying to these religious rulers that they were children of the Devil. Apparently, there are some people who are not the children of God! One becomes a child of God only through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The words of Jesus antagonized these men. Yet, Jesus insisted that His words are truth. He also insisted that none of them could convince Him of sin. Jesus is from God, and anyone who is a child of God will listen to Jesus Christ. People still don't like to hear that today. Folk try to think we're all nice, sweet brothers to each other, and they talk of love, love, love. My friend, if you are going to stand for the truth today, then you will denounce the evil just as our Lord did. That is going to bring antagonism.

And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not [[John 8:45](#)].

Isn't it interesting that Jesus can tell people the truth and they will not believe. It arouses their intense antagonism. Yet people will believe the wildest rumors and the biggest lies. Dictators have learned that. Hitler was very frank about this in his book when he said that if a big lie is told again and again and again, finally the people will believe it. Today advertisers and the news media have learned this also.

Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?

He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.

Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? [[John 8:46-48](#)].

Jesus put His very life on the line when He asked, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" This is one of the great proofs of the deity of Christ. Believe me, if any of His enemies had had one shred of evidence against Him, they would have used it. They have no logical answers for His questions. So what do they do? They come up with ridicule. I learned this method long ago when I was on a debate team. When they have no logical answer, they resort to ridicule. Listen to the Jews. "You're a Samaritan; you have a demon" -- as I'm sure you know, demon is the correct translation. This is name-calling and pure ridicule.

Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me.

And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death [[John 8:49-51](#)].

I wish we could see Him standing in that crowd. They hate Him so much that they want to kill Him. They have murder in their hearts, and He has nothing but love in His. He is going to go to the Cross to die for them. They are thinking of death for Him, but He is offering them life. "If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death." He is offering them eternal life, spiritual life. My friend, this Jesus is more than a man.

Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death.

Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?

Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God:

Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying.

Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.

Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?

Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by [[John 8:52-59](#)].

Did Abraham ever see Christ? He certainly did. The appearance of God to people in the Old Testament was an appearance of Jesus Christ to these people. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" ([John 1:18](#)). Then, too, although Abraham's body was buried there, yet Abraham was really not dead but was in the presence of God. Jesus makes this very clear, as recorded in [Luke 20:38](#). "For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him."

The liberal theologian today teaches that Jesus Christ was a great teacher but that He never really claimed to be God. My friend, listen to this. "Before Abraham was, I am." Not, I was -- I AM. He is the Jehovah, the I AM, God. The Jews understood perfectly. Because they knew precisely what He was claiming, they took up stones to kill Him for blasphemy.

The issue is Jesus Christ. He put these Jews on the spot. They had to make a decision concerning Him. You must make a decision concerning Him. Either He is the Truth or He is a liar. Either He is God and Savior, or He is not. You must decide. Either you accept Him or you reject Him. Remember that your decision does not in any way change who He is. He is the great I AM, Jehovah, the eternal God. Your decision is to accept or deny this.

## Chapter 9

**THEME:** Jesus opens the eyes of a man born blind in Jerusalem (fifth work); record of the miracle; reaction to the miracle

The Lord has been giving His discourse on the Light of the World. Because He claimed that He is God, the Jews wanted to kill Him. Jesus "hid" Himself as He went out of the temple, "going through the midst of them" ([John 8:59](#)). It was a miracle that He could escape this angry mob. His time had not yet come, and so they could not lay their hands on Him.

The incident which now follows is still really a continuation of the discourse on the Light of the World. The enemies of the Lord Jesus could not see because they were spiritually blind. The blind man also could not see, even when the Light of the World stood before him, but Jesus is going to reveal Himself to him. Before the blind man can see, he must have his eyes restored. Light must be received. There must be a receiver as well as a sender of Light.

We used to argue the question about noise. If a tree falls in the forest and nobody is there to hear it, is there a noise? The obvious answer is that there are sound waves, but if there is no ear there to pick up the sound and interpret it, no one hears it as noise. There must be a receiver.

The lack of sight does not mean that light is not there. Light reveals the condition of the eye. The Light of the World reveals the condition of the soul. The Pharisees thought they saw, but they were blind.

There is a story of a mining explosion in West Virginia. The explosion plunged the trapped men into total darkness. When the rescue team managed to get a light through to them, one of the young men finally said, "Well, why don't they turn on the light?" They all looked at him in amazement, and then they realized that the explosion had blinded him. In the darkness, he did not know that he was blind. The light revealed to him and to them that he was blind.

This is what Jesus means in [verse 39](#) of this chapter: "For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind." Light reveals the true condition. Those who are blind, but do not realize it, can know that they are truly blind.

A prominent member of the English Parliament took Mr. Burke, who was a statesman and a great orator, to hear Dr. Black, one of the great preachers of Scotland. Dr. Black preached a powerful sermon exalting the Lord Jesus Christ. After the service the friend waited for Mr. Burke's reaction to the message. Finally he said, "He is a great orator, but what was he talking about?" Here was a brilliant man who was blind.

It is our responsibility to get out the Word of God, and there our responsibility ends. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to open the heart of the listener and cause him to obey the Word. We should present the Light of the World to people, but the Holy Spirit must open

the eyes. This is what is meant in [2Corinthians 2:15-16](#): "For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life . . ." We are equally as "successful" when we do not win a convert as when we do. We are simply to shine the light, to hold up Jesus Christ, the Light of the World. One fellow will say to us, "Where is the light? That doesn't make sense to me." We will look at him and say, "Poor fellow, he is blind." Another fellow will say to us, "Thank you for showing me the light. I was blind but now I see."

#### JESUS OPENS THE EYES OF A MAN BORN BLIND IN JERUSALEM (Fifth Work)

And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth [[John 9:1](#)].

Logically this episode of the blind man follows the wonderful statement of our Lord, "I am the light of the world" ([John 8:12](#)). There evidently was a lapse of time between chapter 8 and the opening of chapter 9 because He is moving in a more leisurely manner - "as Jesus passed by."

#### **Record Of The Miracle (9:2-7)**

This is the only record of our Lord healing a man with congenital blindness.

And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? [[John 9:2](#)].

The disciples want to establish the cause of his disease. They want to discuss who is at fault, who it is that sinned. In their day there were probably four answers they would have given. The pagans of that day, as many of today also, believed in reincarnation and held that congenital disease could be the result of sins committed during a former existence. The Jews never did accept this explanation. Then there is the argument of heredity, that the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children to the third and fourth generations (see [Exod. 20:5](#)). We know that this is possible and that blindness in some cases can be the result of the sin of the parent. Then, there was the explanation that the sin of Adam was passed to each member of the human family so that all are subject to death and disease. And finally, the Jewish rabbis believed that a child in the womb could sin.

Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.

As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world [[John 9:3-5](#)].

Jesus doesn't give them the answer they wanted. He says the important thing is not to probe around in the past and try to find out who is guilty. The thing to do is to cure the man. It may be true that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, but after a man is sick, it's pretty important to get that pound of cure for him.

God has His own wise reasons for permitting sickness, disease, suffering, and trouble. When I went to the hospital for surgery, I received letters from hundreds of people. Out of those letters, there were several who proposed to tell me why God let this happen to me. The only trouble was, I don't think that any one of them knew. God doesn't always reveal to us why He permits things. I believe this:

God never does, nor suffers to be done But what we would ourselves,  
Could we but see through all events of things As well as He.

God has His way, and He doesn't propose to tell us all His reasons. He does ask us to walk with Him by faith through the dark times of our lives.

I think, frankly, that we need to understand that our Lord is not saying for one minute that this man was sort of a spiritual guinea pig. I believe the punctuation of the verse misleads us. Jesus is saying, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents. But that the works of God should be made manifest in him, I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day."

God has created you and me for His glory. He did not create us that we might try to be a somebody down here. He created us for His glory. If we miss that, we miss the entire purpose of our creation. These trials and sufferings come to us because they bring about the glory of God. This blind man, through the healing of his blindness, will bring about the glory of God. Not only will this blind man see (and think how much he would enjoy seeing all the rest of his life), but also he will see Jesus Christ and come to know Him as his Savior.

Now Jesus reverts to His original statement. "I am the light of the world." The night makes all of mankind blind. No one can see. Christ is the spiritual Light of the World, and without Him everyone is blind. But as long as He is in the world, He is the Light of the World. He is still in the world today, my friend. He comes to us in the person of the Holy Spirit. Unless the Son of God, by means of the Holy Spirit, opens our eyes so that we can see spiritual things, we will remain blind as bats.

When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay  
of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the  
clay,

And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by  
interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and  
came seeing [[John 9:6-7](#)].

Christ had to touch the blind man, and the blind man had to obey Christ. Christ must touch our spiritual vision and bring new life to the dead spiritual optic nerve. It is not a question of who sinned. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" ([Rom. 3:23](#)). If Christ has not touched your eyes, you are not seeing.

There are so many people right in our churches today who are blind and don't know it. People write to me and say they listened to our Bible-teaching program for months; then all of a sudden their eyes were opened and they saw. Like the poor young man in the mine explosion, there are people standing in the light of the Word of God who say, "Why doesn't someone turn on the light?" That is exactly what Pontius Pilate did. He asked,

"What is truth?" ([John 18:38](#)) as he was standing right in the presence of the One who said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" ([John 14:6](#)). We need to let Christ touch our eyes so that we can see.

You will notice that Christ touched this man although the man still could not see Him. Then Jesus asked him to go wash, and the man obeyed. We may ask why Jesus used this method to heal the man. I think there are several reasons: (1) This Gospel sets forth the deity of Christ, but it also sets forth Jesus as a man. Jesus had just claimed His deity and now He touches the blind man, man to man. (2) The blind man must obey the Lord Jesus Christ if he is to see. (3) The Lord sent him to the pool which is called Siloam, and John makes a point of telling us Siloam means "Sent." Even the name of the pool bears testimony that Jesus is sent from the Father. Jesus may be implying to this man that He has been sent from the Father, and in the same way He is sending him. (4) The blind man needed the water to make him see. The water represents the Word of God in many passages of Scripture. It is my firm conviction that there never can be a conversion without the Word of God. "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple" ([Ps. 119:130](#)). (5) The Jews needed this testimony because in [verse 29](#) they say, "We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is." They must see by this healing of the blind man that Jesus is the God-man who is sent from the Father.

May I point out that the method of healing this man is not the important issue. The Person who heals is the important issue. It is Christ who opened his eyes. The blind man's part was to trust and obey.

Jesus used different methods of healing people. If the method was the touch, the man healed would insist everyone would need the same experience that he had. He would go away singing, "The Touch of His Hand on Mine." When Jesus healed others by not touching them at all, they would insist that one doesn't need to experience anything, not even His touch. They would say that all one needs is the Word of Jesus. They would go away singing, "Only Believe." Then, this blind man here would say to all of them that they are wrong. He'd say you've got to be touched and then you must go to the pool and wash; so he would be singing, "Shall We Gather at the River?" You are going to tell me that is perfectly absurd, silly, and ridiculous. It sure is, but I know a lot of "blind" folk today who will argue about the necessity of a certain ceremony or an experience to be saved. However, the all-important thing is to come to Christ, to believe Him, to obey Him. "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" ([John 6:37](#)). It is the person of the Lord Jesus Christ that is important.

I want to stop here and show how the condition of the blind man parallels our condition as sinners before we were saved.

1. The blind man was outside the temple, shut out from God. Remember that Paul says in [Ephesians 2:12](#) that we were strangers from the covenants of promise, that we had no hope; we were without God in the world. That is the condition of everyone before he is saved. Without God, without hope, shut out!

2. The man was blind. He was unable to see the Savior. John Hancock heard a sermon of John Witherspoon on the text, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be

saved" ([John 10:9](#)). As he walked home he thought to himself, "I have always admired John Witherspoon but tonight I didn't follow him. He impresses me as being a great preacher, but tonight I couldn't understand him." When he got home he put the key in the lock and pushed open the big door of his colonial home. He said, "Oh, I see!" His family laughed and said, "Of course, you see. You were out in the dark and now you have come into the light." He answered, "Yes, but I mean that I now see that Jesus is the door, and faith is the key that turns the lock. I now trust Christ, and I see Him."

We were blind without Christ. Did you see Him as your Savior before you were saved? Was He the wonderful One to you then? No. We were blind.

3. The man had been blind from birth. We were born in sin. We came into this world as sinners.

4. The blind man was beyond human help. Nobody had a cure for his blindness. We were helpless sinners in this world and no one had a cure for us.

5. He was a beggar. This is what hurts a lot of people. They hate to admit they are beggars. They would be willing to pay for salvation, but it is not for sale. You have to come to God for salvation as this beggar did. God gives it away. This beggar could never have bought salvation because he had nothing with which to buy it. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" ([Isa. 55:1](#)).

6. He made no appeal to Jesus. Blind Bartimaeus was loud and insistent, but this man just sat there. He didn't know Jesus. It took him a long time to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Friend, did you really want to get saved? Were you looking for salvation? Were you looking for the Lord Jesus? If you are the average person, you were not. You were not looking for Him, but He was looking for you. That is the story of man and his salvation.

7. There was no pity shown to him by others. The Jews passed him by on their way to the temple. The disciples wanted to argue about him. They had no intention of showing any mercy to this man, and they were not prepared to do anything for him. This is a picture of the human family. Christ feels compassion for us, and Christ alone can help us.

### **Reaction To The Miracle (9:8-41)**

There is a change in a man who had been blind. He no longer must feel his way home every day but walks home seeing. I think this man was shouting, "Hallelujah, I can see!"

1. The neighbors --

The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged?

Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he [[John 9:8-9](#)].

Can't you picture the neighborhood? Someone stands at the window and says, "Look, there's the blind man." His wife goes to the door to look and says, "That's not the blind



man. He looks like the blind man but he's not blind." So the man must identify himself to his own neighbors.

The neighbors knew something had happened to him. I do not believe that if you are truly converted, if you have changed from blindness to seeing, you can go on without people noticing that you have changed. If there is no evidence of a change, then something is wrong, radically wrong.

Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened?

He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight.

Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not [[John 9:10-12](#)].

I love the testimony of this man. He told only what he knew -- a good, honest, sincere testimony. He grew in perception every time he gave his testimony. Notice how accurate the Word of God is. He didn't say Jesus took spittle and made clay. In his blindness he didn't know that. All he knew was that he felt clay rubbed on his eyes. His testimony is honest, not elaborated or glamorized.

Salvation is really a simple matter. It is coming to the Lord Jesus and experiencing the power of God. This man hadn't even seen Jesus and yet the Lord Jesus had opened his eyes. The important thing for us is not to see Jesus but to believe in Him.

2. The Pharisees --

They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind.

And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.

Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see [[John 9:13-15](#)].

Again, the man's testimony is very simple. You would think these Pharisees would have rejoiced that a blind man could now see. You'd think they would break out in a "Hallelujah Chorus." Not this cold-blooded crowd! Now notice the reaction of the Pharisees. They just don't know what to do about a man born blind who is now walking around seeing.

Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them [[John 9:16](#)].

These men were undoubtedly some of the cleverest men on earth. I believe beyond a shadow of a doubt that they would have been more than a match for the Greek philosophers. They were experts at arguing. They are going to use a syllogistic method of arguing. They have a major premise, a minor premise, and then a conclusion. If both the

premises are true, the conclusion will be true. But if either of the premises is false, the conclusion will be false. Here is their reasoning:

Major premise -- all people from God keep the Sabbath.

Minor premise -- Jesus does not keep the Sabbath.

Conclusion -- Jesus is not from God.

Their false major premise kept people from coming to the true conclusion. If both premises had been true, their conclusion would have been true.

Major premise -- Only people from God can open the eyes of a man born blind.

Minor premise -- Jesus opened the eyes of the blind man.

Conclusion -- Jesus is from God.

Unfortunately, we find similar controversies going on in our churches today. There are arguments over nonessentials while the world outside is dying and going to hell, blind to the gospel. There is still the same old argument. "He doesn't keep the Sabbath" -- which means "He doesn't do it our way."

They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet.

But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight [[John 9:17-18](#)].

In their argumentation they ask, "How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?" This is the very thing which helped the blind man to grow in his perception. If a sinner can't do such miracles, yet because of Him he can see, then this One must be a prophet! He must be from God. The blind man has taken another step.

"But the Jews did not believe concerning him." When men don't want to believe a thing, it is amazing what little peccadilloes they will attempt to dig up to really get away from the truth. Because they won't accept the man's testimony, they call in his parents.

3. The parents --

And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see?

His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind:

But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself.

These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue [[John 9:19-22](#)].

Here is religious conniving, and it is one of the most pernicious things that is imaginable. The religious rulers are trying to find somebody they can hang this on, and the parents want to get off the hook. These rulers never contested the fact that the man had been

blind and now could see. It's only professors in swivel chairs in universities who doubt the miracles Jesus performed. The people who were present never denied that a miracle had been performed.

Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him [[John 9:23](#)].

The parents knew that a miracle had been done. But they were not prepared to explain how the miracle had been done. They did not want to be excommunicated because that would completely ostracize them, and they didn't want to get into that kind of trouble. Since the religious rulers cannot deny the miracle, they will try to keep the Lord Jesus from receiving the credit for it.

Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner [[John 9:24](#)].

The Jews now go back to their first argument: this Man is a sinner because He broke the Sabbath. Don't give glory to this Man, the Lord Jesus. Give the glory to God. My, doesn't that sound nice and pious!

He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see [[John 9:25](#)].

He hasn't seen the Lord Jesus yet. This is the second time they have brought him into court, and he is a little weary of the whole thing. Yet, listen to his testimony. "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see."

That is the testimony of any sinner who has been saved. Once I was blind but now I see. Once I was in spiritual darkness but now I am in spiritual light. Once I did not know Christ, but now I know Him as my Savior. I don't know about you, but I get a little weary of long-winded testimonies. I suspect that many of them are padded and embellished and polished up to make them attractive. Sometimes the emphasis is placed on the past, so much so that the people actually come out as heroes in their testimony. They were leaders in crime, they were rubbing shoulders with the gang leaders, they knew all the great ones, they were the worst alcoholics, the worst gamblers, and on and on. Then they heard the gospel and were converted. The people who hear such testimonies go home and call their friends, "My, have you heard the testimony of So-and-So?" -- and they are so busy telling about So-and-So and all the things he had done that they hardly even mention Christ. Friend, the important part of any testimony that I want to hear is simply this, "Once I was blind; now I see."

Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes? [[John 9:26](#)].

The Pharisees are really up against it. They're trying their best to find some little flaw that they can seize upon to explain away the miracle that has been performed. They cannot simply dismiss it as theologians and professors try to do today. The man is there, and he can see.

He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples?

Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples [[John 9:27-28](#)].

The man who had been blind is beginning to understand what they are doing, and he gets a little sarcastic with them, "Will you also be His disciples?" He makes another interesting observation, "Will you hear it again?" Not only are the Pharisees blind so they cannot see the Light of the World, they are also deaf so they cannot hear.

We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is.

The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes.

Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.

Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.

If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.

They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out [[John 9:29-34](#)].

The religious rulers revile him. You can notice again that, when men do not have an answer, they will resort to ridicule. Inadvertently they have slowly moved the healed blind man into a line of logic so that he knows only a man from God could do such a miracle: there is no doubt that he had been healed, so this Man must be from God. Remember, he still has never seen Jesus.

These rulers have no answer. They cannot meet the argument or give a satisfactory explanation. The facts confound and contradict them. What do they do? They cast the man out. This excommunication shut him out of the temple. It also shut him out of business. It made him an outcast, almost like a leper. He would be shut out of everything religious and social.

#### 4. The blind man meets Jesus --

Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?

He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?

And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.

And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him [[John 9:35-38](#)].

The Lord Jesus comes on the scene. This man has defended the Lord Jesus, has come out the winner in the argument, but has been cast out by the religious rulers. It is quite wonderful that the Lord Jesus comes to him. Friend, it is always Jesus who looks for the man. The Lord has prepared this man all along the way. Now the man must put his faith in the Son of God. Our Lord now comes to him with that crucial question: "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" The experiences through which he has gone have strengthened his faith and clarified his thinking. The Lord knows that he is ready for this final step. This man is so very open, so honest and sincere. He asks who the Son of God is so that he might believe. You can see the eagerness of this man. He wants to go farther. He wants to come to know Him. Our Lord responds in this lovely way, "Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee." The man believes Him and worships Him. This is one of the finest instances of faith that we have in the entire Word of God. Our Lord took this blind man step by step and brought him to His feet where he could say, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped Him.

It is so with the steps of every sinner. We are blind at first. We are lost sinners, and we don't even see our lost condition. Then we come to Christ. He reveals Himself to us; our eyes are opened and we see who He is and what He has done for us. Then the question is: "Will you believe?" This man's answer can also be your answer, "Lord, I believe." And you will fall at His feet and worship Him.

And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind [[John 9:39](#)].

This seems to be a strange statement. The Lord says that there are those who have eyes and see not. They have physical eyes and physical sight, but they are blind spiritually. If a man will admit he is blind and will come to Jesus as a blind man, Jesus will give him spiritual insight. Paul writes: "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" ([1Cor. 2:14](#)).

My friend, if you have come into the presence of the Lord Jesus, the Light of the World, and still say, "What is truth?" or, "I just don't see that He is my Savior," or, "I don't understand what this is about," then you are not seeing. You are spiritually blind. The Pharisees had eyes; they thought they saw; they were religious people, zealous people, and yet they were blind.

The heathen are lost. They are in darkness. Yet the Lord puts each man through a series of steps. If there is any man today out yonder in heathenism who wants to know about Jesus, the Lord will get the gospel to him. The man who sits in the church pew and hears the preaching of the Word of God and the giving out of the gospel is in the presence of the Light. That Light reveals his blindness. Jesus said, ". . . If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" ([Matt. 6:23](#)). If you know the facts about Jesus Christ, the Light of the World, but you will not believe, then, my friend, you are spiritually blind and there is nothing else to offer you. If you have been in the presence of the Savior of the world and have rejected Him, there is no other Savior to offer to you.

And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also?

Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth [[John 9:40-41](#)].

We began with a blind man who was healed so that he saw, both physically and spiritually. We end with religious rulers who were terribly, tragically blind, yet who thought they could see. In the presence of Christ, in the presence of the Light, in the presence of the revelation of God, they said they had no sin.

Some of the most dogmatic people today are the atheists and the cultists. They say they see, but they are blind. They reject the Lord Jesus Christ, and so their sin remains. Although they are not walking around with a white walking stick, they are blind.

## Chapter 10

**THEME:** Jesus is the Good Shepherd (seventh word); humanity -- Christ in form of servant; deity -- Christ equal with God

### Humanity -- Christ In Form Of Servant (10:1-21)

The ancient sheepfold of that day still exists in many towns in that land. It was a public sheepfold. In the evening all the shepherds who lived in that town would bring their sheep to the sheepfold and turn them in for the night. They would entrust them to the porter who kept the sheep; then they would go to their homes for the night. The next morning the shepherds would identify themselves to the porter, and he would let them in the door to get their sheep.

#### 1. "Door into the sheepfold" --

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep [[John 10:1-2](#)].

The sheepfold represents the nation Israel. Jesus is telling them that He came in by the door. He goes on to say that anyone who doesn't come by the door, but climbs in some other way, is a thief and a robber. This is a tremendous claim that He is making here. He came in by the door. He came in legally. That is, He came in fulfillment of the prophecies of the Old Testament. He came in under the Law. "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law" ([Gal. 4:4](#)). He came in the line of David according to prophecy (see [Luke 1:32](#)). He was born in Bethlehem according to prophecy (see [Mic. 5:2](#)). Not only was He in the line of David, but He was born of a virgin according to prophecy (see [Isa. 7:14](#)). At the time that He was born, He was a rod out of the stem of Jesse (see [Isa. 11:1](#)). Now this is interesting. By the time Jesus came, the royal line of David had dropped back to the level of the peasant. There was no royalty anymore. Jesse had been a farmer down in Bethlehem. In fact, he raised sheep. His son, David, had the anointing oil poured on him, and that line

became the kingly line. But when the Lord Jesus was born, He was just a branch out of the stem of Jesse, the peasant. Jesus was simply a carpenter and wore a carpenter's robe. How accurately the prophecies were fulfilled!

He is the Messiah, and He came in through the door. No one else could have had the credentials that He had. Anyone else would have been a thief and a robber. They would not have had the credentials of the Messiah and would have had to climb over the fence. You see, in the preceding chapter, the man healed of his blindness had been excommunicated, put out of the temple. The religious rulers are rejecting the Lord Jesus, and now they are challenging Him. Remember they said, "Are we blind also?" Our Lord made it very clear that they were blind. Now He presents His credentials. This is a tremendous claim He is making in this chapter: Israel is the sheepfold; Jesus is the Good Shepherd.

To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice; and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out [[John 10:3](#)].

Whom does the porter represent? The porter is the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God came upon Jesus, and everything that He did, He did by the power of the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit was opening the ears of His sheep to hear His voice. His sheep have responded. This ties in with the preceding chapter. Those religious rulers were blind spiritually and, what is more, they were deaf. They didn't even hear His voice. But He calls His own sheep by name and leads them out. The blind man heard Him call. Simon heard His call, and Jesus changed his name to Peter, which means a stone. He called James and John, Nathanael and Philip. He stopped under a tree in Jericho and called Zacchaeus. He calls His sheep by name.

Let me digress for a moment to say that when the Lord Jesus calls His own out of the world at the time of the Rapture, I believe that His call will have every believer's name in it. I think I'll hear Him say personally, "Vernon McGee." That will be wonderful! He knows my name, you see, and He'll call it at that time. And He'll call you if you are one of His sheep. You will hear your name in His shout!

He leads His sheep out of the sheepfold, out of Judaism. You see, the religious rulers had excommunicated the man whose sight Jesus had restored. Jesus is going to lead this sheep out of Judaism.

And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice [[John 10:4](#)].

When I was near Bethlehem, I spent some time looking over a sheepfold that was still in use. A sheepfold is an enclosure where shepherds put their sheep for the night. The porter has charge of it. Then the shepherd spends the night in his own bed. When he comes to the sheepfold in the morning, his sheep are all mixed up with somebody else's sheep -- there is no brand or marking on the sheep. How does he get the sheep that are his? He calls them by name. The sheep don't have to be identified; they know their shepherd's voice. When he starts out over the hill, his own sheep come out of the fold and follow him. They know him. Our Lord says, "The sheep will follow him because they know his voice."



It is the most wonderful thing in the world to know that, when we give out the Word of God, Jesus is calling His sheep. The Spirit of God is the Porter who does the opening, and the sheep will hear. Our Lord will lead His sheep out of a legal system, perhaps even out of a church where they're not being fed. They will follow Him. You cannot permanently fool God's sheep. It is true that the sheep may get into a cult or an "ism" for a while, but the sheep will recognize the voice of the Shepherd. Unfortunately, many preachers are afraid to stand up for the truth; however, when a man preaches the Word of God, the sheep will hear it. We can depend on that because our Lord said, "My sheep hear my voice" ([v. 27](#)).

And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers [[John 10:5](#)].

I believe that you can fool some of God's people some of the time, but I don't think you can fool God's people all the time. For a time, God's sheep may think they hear Him but eventually discover that it is not His voice. Then they will turn to the teaching of the Word of God because they know their Shepherd. It is amazing. I have been teaching the Word of God for about forty years and have learned again and again that when His sheep hear His voice, they will follow Him.

For a long time I worried about those who will not listen to the message. I have reached the point that I don't worry about them. The reason they don't hear His voice is that they are not His sheep. Wherever we find people who are eager for the Word of God, we know they are His sheep.

This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them [[John 10:6](#)].

The word parable is really not an accurate translation. The Greek word for parable is parable and the word in this verse is paroimia, which really means "an allegory." The Gospel of John does not record any of the parables of our Lord. It records the metaphors and allegories such as "I am the light of the world" ([John 8:12](#)) and "I am the bread of life" ([John 6:35](#)). These are not parables but are figures of speech to let us know something about God. They are intended to give us light on the subject so that we can see. So it should actually read, "This allegory spake Jesus unto them." They didn't understand what He was saying because, as He had said, they were blind.

Our Lord also said, "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear" ([Matt. 13:9](#)). It is possible to have ears and yet not hear. They hear it all right, but they don't hear it as the Word of God. That is the important thing. Beloved, how do you hear it? It is this important difference in hearing to which our Lord referred when He quoted Isaiah, ". . . By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive" ([Matt. 13:14](#)).

2. "Door of the sheep" --

Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.

All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them [[John 10:7-8](#)].

Here He gives another allegory. He has spoken about the door of the sheepfold, but now He moves one more step and says that He is the Door of the sheep. The Lord Jesus is the Door for those coming out of Israel. They had just cast the blind man out of the synagogue, out of the sheepfold. Immediately the Lord Jesus had come to this man and revealed Himself to him. When the Lord revealed Himself to the man, He became the Door for this man. The man had been brought out of the sheepfold and to the Lord Jesus Christ to follow Him. This is the second great truth which our Lord is stating in this chapter.

Our Lord will state this same principle in [John 15](#) when He says, "I am the true vine . . . ye are the branches" ([John 15:1, 5](#)). The vine in the Old Testament is a picture of the nation Israel. Jesus is saying that it is no longer the connection with the nation Israel but the relationship with Him which is the joining of the branches with the Vine. They must come out from Judaism, come out from ritualism, and come to Him. He is saying that He is the Door. Remember, He is talking to the religious rulers. By the way, some of them did come to Him after His resurrection.

### 3. "The Door" --

I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly [[John 10:9-10](#)].

Jesus Christ is the Way. He is the only Way. He is the Way out for you and He is the Way in for you. He has come to bring us an abundant life.

The thief comes to steal, to kill, and to destroy. I think this is a test you can apply to a church, a religious organization, a radio or television program. Is it a religious racket? Is somebody getting rich out of it? Compare it to the Good Shepherd who came to save sinners and to give us life, abundant life.

Here is a brief review of this passage:

1. "Door into the sheepfold" ([v. 1](#)). The sheepfold is the nation Israel. Jesus will lead His sheep out of Judaism, out from under a legalistic system.
2. "Door of the sheep" ([v. 7](#)). Jesus is the Door for those coming out of Judaism (e.g., the excommunicated man who had been blind); He has called them out. ". . . Save yourselves from this untoward generation" ([Acts 2:40](#)).
3. "The Door" ([v. 9](#)). Jesus Christ is the Door for both Jew and Gentile. He is the Door of salvation. Freedom to go in and out and find pasture is the liberty of the sons of God in Christ Jesus.
4. "The Good Shepherd" --

I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.

The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep [[John 10:11-13](#)].

How can Jesus be the Door and the Shepherd at the same time? Actually, there was no door that swung on hinges and had a padlock to secure the sheepfold. The man who was guarding it slept across the doorway so that he himself was the door. Jesus is not only the Door, but He is also the Good Shepherd, the One who stays in the doorway. He is the Door which opens to eternal life; He is the One who protects His own; He is also the Good Shepherd.

Jesus is also called the Lamb of God. How can He be the Lamb of God and at the same time be the Good Shepherd? This may sound like mixed metaphors, but it is one of the most glorious truths in Scripture. He is the "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" ([John 1:29](#)). He came down and identified Himself with us who are the sheep - but He is the Shepherd also. The fact that He became a Lamb emphasizes the humanity of Jesus Christ. The fact that He is the Good Shepherd emphasizes the deity of Christ. He alone was worthy and able to save us. No other human being could do this; He had to be God.

The Lord Jesus Christ has a threefold relationship to this flock which is known as His church. First of all He is the Good Shepherd, and He defines the Good Shepherd in [verse 11](#): "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." Then He is the Great Shepherd, for we read in the magnificent benediction given in [Hebrews 13:20](#): "Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep with the blood of an eternal covenant, even our Lord Jesus, make you perfect in every good thing to do his will . . ." (ASV). So today He is the Great Shepherd of the sheep, as seen in [Psalm 23](#). But wait, that does not give the total picture. He is also the Chief Shepherd. This speaks of the future. Peter says in his first epistle, "And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" ([1Pet. 5:4](#)).

The hireling does not care for the sheep. Founders of some of the world religions did very little for their followers. Modern cult leaders actually get rich off the people. In contrast to this, the Good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep, and He protects His own.

I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep [[John 10:14-15](#)].

Here is a wonderful relationship. He knows His sheep, and His sheep know Him. Paul wrote, "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection . . ." ([Phil. 3:10](#)). To know Him is to love Him. In this connection one should read what God says about shepherds in His message through Ezekiel, chapter 34.

Notice that this is the third time that He says His sheep know Him. To know Jesus Christ is all-important, and everything else becomes secondary. That is one reason I have given

up arguing about nonessentials. Let's stop arguing about religion and about details. The important issue is to know Jesus Christ. Do you hear His voice; do you know the Shepherd?

There is no shepherd like this One. David risked his life to save his sheep from a bear and from a lion. The Son of David gave His life for His sheep.

And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd [[John 10:16](#)].

There are other sheep which are not of this fold -- the fold is Israel -- but others will also hear His voice, and there shall be one flock and one Shepherd. It is really "flock" (poimne), not "fold" (aule), in this second phrase. You see, there is to be one flock and one Shepherd. There is to be the one flock containing Jew and Gentile, rich and poor, bond and free, male and female, black and white, people from every nation and out of every tongue and tribe.

Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.

No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father [[John 10:17-18](#)].

He says that all of this is the will of the Father. The Father loves Him because He died for us. We also ought to love Him because He died for us. He made His soul an offering for sin. On the cross during those three hours of darkness, God the Father put upon Him the sin of the world, and He went through hell for you and me. The Good Shepherd gave His life for the sheep.

He makes it very clear that He gave His life willingly. He was in full control at His trial. Also He set the time of His death. The Jews said it shouldn't be on a feast day lest there be an uproar, a riot of the people, but He was crucified on the feast day. He was never more kingly than when He went to the Cross. If one reads the Gospels carefully, one is aware that actually the Roman government was on trial, the nation Israel was on trial, you and I were on trial. Although He didn't have to die, He did it willingly for the sins of the world. "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame . . ." ([Heb. 12:2](#)). No man could take His life from Him. He claimed power to lay down His life and to take it again.

There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings.

And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him?

Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind? [[John 10:19-21](#)].

This refers to the fact that He opened the eyes of the man who was born blind. The crowd there that day said, "Well, a demon could never have done what He did!" There is a

division. Why? Because some are sheep and some are not. Sheep will hear and the others will not hear.

The issue is still the same today as it was then. Either the Lord Jesus Christ was a madman or He is the Savior of the world. Either He has a demon or He is the Son of God. There has always been that division. When Paul preached at Athens, some believed and some did not. When I preach, some believe and some do not. We cannot expect it to be any different.

The so-called liberal theologians are the most inconsistent and illogical people. Jesus Christ cannot be only a good teacher and a great example. He is either a fraud or He is the Son of God. Jesus Christ puts you on the horns of a dilemma, my friend. He is a madman or He is your God and your Savior.

### **Deity -- Christ Equal With God (10:22-42)**

And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter [[John 10:22](#)].

The Feast of Tabernacles was in the last part of October; the Feast of Dedication was in the last part of December -- so there was a two-month interval. This feast celebrated the time when Judas Maccabaeus delivered the temple from Antiochus Ephiphanes, the Syrian, who had polluted it. This took place in 167 B.C. and was still celebrated in our Lord's day.

"And it was winter." Jesus is through with the nation. From here on, in the Gospel of John, He talks to His own. He will not make another public call. It is now too late for the harvest. The Lamb of God is being shut up in preparation to go to the Cross and die for the sins of the world.

Friend, may I remind you that you can play at this thing too long. Winter is coming for you. There will come a day when you won't be able to witness. If you are going to do anything for Him, you had better do it now. If you have never sincerely accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior, may I remind you that winter can come for that, too. There does come a time when it is too late, my beloved, too late to be saved. You can persist in rejecting the Lord Jesus Christ so long that finally you will be unable to accept Him. The prophet spoke of this eventuality: "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved" ([Jer. 8:20](#)).

And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch.

Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly [[John 10:23-24](#)].

There was a big porch out there which was for the Gentiles, for those who were outside the nation Israel. Our Lord was no longer coming into the temple. It was winter, and He walked in Solomon's porch.

Jesus had made His identity very clear, and those who accepted Him understood that He was the Messiah, the Christ. Remember that Andrew had told his brother, "We have

found the Messiah (see [John 1:41](#)). Nathanael recognized Him, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel" ([John 1:49](#)). The Samaritan woman understood who He was; and the Samaritan men said, "Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world" ([John 4:42](#)). Also the man healed of his blindness believed and worshiped Him. Now these religious leaders with their subtle questions are actually casting the blame on Him! They make it sound as if it is Jesus' fault for not giving enough information, whereas it is their lack of will to believe what God had revealed to them. Well, Jesus has revealed His messiahship to those who will hear, and now He declares it to these religious rulers.

Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me.

But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you [[John 10:25-26](#)].

Jesus tells them that He has the proofs of His messiahship. His works bear witness to it. He was born in the line of David, according to prophecy. He was introduced by John the Baptist. No man taught as He taught. No man could convict Him of sin. When John the Baptist sent his disciples to find out whether Jesus was the Messiah or whether they should look for another, Jesus told them to go back and tell John the Baptist the things that He was doing. Then John the Baptist would know He had the credentials of the Messiah. You see, His teaching demonstrated that He was the Messiah, His life demonstrated it, and His miracles demonstrated it. The problem was not in His lack of credentials. The problem was in the unbelieving heart. The fact that they did not believe demonstrated that they were not His sheep. That's the negative side. Now He states the positive side.

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

I and my Father are one [[John 10:27-30](#)].

His sheep hear His voice. And they follow Him. The brand of ownership on the sheep is obedience. Do you want to know whether a person is saved or not? Then see if he is obeying Christ. Our ears must be open to His voice. "The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the LORD hath made even both of them" ([Prov. 20:12](#)).

"I know them." I'm glad somebody knows me, aren't you? I am sometimes misunderstood, and I have to explain myself to people. However, I never need to explain anything to Him. He knows when I'm putting up an excuse; He knows when I am evading an issue; He understands me. He knows.

"And they follow me." I believe in the eternal security of the believer and in the insecurity of the make-believer. "They follow me" -- it's just that simple. If the shepherd

called his sheep one morning and started up the hill, and out of five hundred sheep in the sheepfold, one hundred came out and followed him, then I would conclude that those one hundred were his sheep. And I would also conclude that the other four hundred were not his sheep.

"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish." Friend, when He gives to them eternal life, that means they don't earn it and they don't work for it. He gives it to them. Note that it is eternal life. It is forever. If it plays out in a week or in a year or until they sin, then it is not eternal life after all. They are not really His sheep if the life does not last forever. The sheep may be in danger, but the Shepherd will protect them. They may be scattered, but He will gather them up again. They shall never perish.

May they backslide? Yes. Will they perish? No. The sheep may get into a pigpen, but there has never yet been a sheep in a pigpen that stayed in a pigpen. Sheep and pigs do not live together. The sheep is always a sheep. No man can pluck that sheep out of the Savior's hand. No enemy, no man, no created being can pluck them out of His hand. This is wonderful! One time a fellow gave me the argument that one can jump out of His hand because we are free moral agents. Listen to the passage. It actually says "no created thing shall pluck them out of my hand." He is the Shepherd. He is God. If you think you can jump out, the Father puts His hand right down on you, and you can't do any jumping. Brother, He's got you and you can't get loose. Both hands are the hands of Deity. No created thing can take the sheep out of His hand.

Years ago a Texas rancher told me about sheep. He said he had two thousand sheep, and someone had to be watching them all the time. If two little sheep go over the hill and get half a mile from the flock, they are lost. They cannot find their way back by themselves. The only way in the world they can be safe is for the shepherd to be there. If a wolf would come up and eat one of the little sheep, you'd think the other one would be smart enough to say, "He ate my little brother, so I'll go back over the hill and join the flock." No, he doesn't know where to go. All he does is go, "Baa," and run around and wait to be dessert for the wolf. A sheep is stupid. Neither has a sheep any way to defend himself. A sheep can't even outrun his enemy. If a sheep is safe, it is not because the sheep is clever or smart. It is because he has a good shepherd.

When I say to you that He gives me eternal life and I shall never perish, you may accuse me of bragging. No, my friend, I am not bragging on myself; I'm bragging about my Shepherd. I have a wonderful Shepherd. He won't lose any of His sheep. If He starts with one hundred, He will not end with ninety-nine. If one gets lost, He will go out and find it. None will be lost.

Then He says that He and the Father are one. He claims to be God.

Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him.

Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?

The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God [[John 10:31-33](#)].



There is one thing that is sure: in that day, those who heard Him understood that He made Himself God. He produced His credentials. There was no way they could deny His miracles. He healed people by the thousands, and there was no denying the evidence. They accused Him of blasphemy. They accused Him of calling Himself God. And do you know, that is exactly what He was doing!

Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?

If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken;

Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?

If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.

But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him [[John 10:34-38](#)].

Their accusation was that He as a man makes Himself God. He quotes to them [Psalm 82:6](#), "I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High." Men are called to be the children of God, but Jesus is unique because He is the Man "whom the Father hath sanctified." He is the One who has been set apart. He is different from any other man in the world. He has been sent on a mission to the world. He is in the Father and the Father is in Him.

Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand,

And went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized; and there he abode.

And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true.

And many believed on him there [[John 10:39-42](#)].

John the Baptist did no miracles, but he bore a true testimony to the Messiah. Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ. He is the One who was to come. What think ye of Christ? This is the way to test your position. You can't be right in any of the rest unless you are first right in your thinking about Him. What think ye of Christ? If you are His sheep, you will hear His voice. If you are not, you will not hear Him. His voice will be drowned out in the babble of voices speaking to you. His sheep are able to hear the Son of God.

## Chapter 11

**THEME:** Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead in Bethany (sixth work)

JESUS RAISES LAZARUS FROM THE DEAD IN BETHANY (Sixth Work)

Let's pause for a moment to get the perspective of John. In the first ten chapters, Christ has revealed Himself in an ever widening circle. This began at the wedding of Cana where there were guests and also His disciples. We are told that His disciples believed on Him. At the Feast of Tabernacles and the Feast of Dedication, the whole nation was before Him. He presented Himself to the nation and He was rejected: His works were rejected in [John 5:16](#); His words were rejected in [John 8:58-59](#); and His Person was rejected in [John 10:30-31](#).

This chapter is a kind of intermission. His public ministry is over and He retires into a private ministry. Centering Himself on individuals, He no longer is reaching out to the nation. The events of this chapter occur between the Feast of Dedication and the Passover which would be sometime between December and April.

The Gospel of John is like climbing up a mountain in that each chapter brings us a little higher than the preceding chapter. Remember that John has told us why he wrote this Gospel: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" ([John 20:30-31](#)). Going back to the very beginning: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" ([John 1:1](#)). "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" ([John 1:14](#)). While He walked among us in the flesh, this great thesis was sustained by miracle and parable and discourse.

Now the supreme question is: Can Jesus raise the dead? The big question in any religion concerns death. Death is a great mystery. And life is a great mystery, but life is practically meaningless if there is no resurrection of the dead. The question to ask of any religion is whether it has power over death.

Liberal theologians long ago threw out the miraculous. They contend that nothing miraculous belongs in the Bible -- not because of any scholarly reason, but simply because they don't believe in the miraculous. Today there is a synthetic doctrine that goes something like this: "I believe in a religion of the here and now, not the hereafter. I don't go for pie in the sky by and by. I want a meat and potatoes religion, one that is practical, not theoretical." Now that is something I want also. And in addition, I want a hope.

Although we are given many benefits right here and now, the greatest of all benefits is eternal life in Christ Jesus. It is very practical to ask the question: "Will the dead be raised?" Life is so brief. Life's little day compared to eternity is infinitesimal. Recently I conducted the funeral of a very wonderful Christian man -- and there sat his wife and mother. Certainly they considered the resurrection very practical. When you stand at a graveside, if you have no hope, you are whistling in the dark and singing in the rain and crying the blues.

I notice that in cults and religions of the day there are all kinds of chicanery and racketeering, but nobody is in the business of raising the dead. Although some of them have claimed they can raise the dead, they never produce the body, the corpus delicti. When Jesus healed the sick, it was the body that was healed. When Jesus raised the dead, it was the body that was raised. Many religions promise much for this life, but nothing for

the hereafter. That is like taking someone for an airplane ride without knowing how to land the plane. The great hope of the Christian faith is the resurrection of the dead!

The Gospels tell us three incidents of Jesus raising the dead. There was the twelve-year-old girl who had just died. She was a juvenile. There was a young man, whose body was being carried to the cemetery. Then there was Lazarus, possibly a senior citizen, who had been dead four days and had been buried. They were all raised, from every age group.

Allow me to be technical and state that these people were raised from the dead but were not resurrected. Rather, it was a restoration to life. Resurrection is this: ". . . It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body . . ." ([1Cor. 15:42-44](#)). These people were raised from the dead, but none of them were given glorified bodies. They all faced death again. Christ is the firstfruits of them that sleep. His is the only true resurrection -- ". . . Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming" ([1Cor. 15:23](#)).

While our Lord used different methods to perform His miracles of healing, His method of raising the dead was always the same. He called to them and spoke to them as if they heard Him. Do you know why He did that? Because they heard Him! I think that when He returns with a shout, every one of us will hear his own name because He will call us back from the dead.

Now let's get into the chapter.

Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.

(It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)  
[[John 11:1-2](#)].

Note that Bethany is the town of Mary. This was written about B.C. 90 and by that time people knew about Mary who had anointed the feet of Jesus with spikenard. The fragrance of the box that she broke still fills this world. Jesus said that her act of devotion would be remembered wherever the gospel was preached. I am of the opinion that many a humble person is breaking an alabaster box of ointment and will have more recognition in heaven than many well-known Christian leaders who receive much publicity down here.

It was the home of Martha. Our Lord had visited there before. Martha had been cumbered and frustrated with her preparations for dinner. Jesus had told her that to sit at His feet and learn of Him is better than being too busy with service.

It was the town of Mary and the home of Martha. There are different gifts. Some women are given a marvelous gift in the home. Talk about women's liberation! I know of no one who is the big boss more than a wife and a mother in her home. She can hustle you out of the kitchen, make you stay out of the refrigerator, and tell you to move when she wants to vacuum. She is in charge of the kitchen and of the whole house. This is the calling of many Christian women. There are others who have an outside ministry. They teach Bible classes and child evangelism classes, and work in the church. Remember, friend, the

woman who serves in her home can be serving the Lord and the woman who serves outside her home can be serving the Lord. The Holy Spirit bestows gifts for many types of ministries.

Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick [[John 11:3](#)].

These are humble folk, and they make no request, no demand of Him. They tell Jesus the problem and let Him decide what to do. So often in prayers I hear the people demanding that the Lord heal the sick. When did God become a Western Union boy? When did He become a waiter to wait upon us or a redcap boy to carry our suitcase? He doesn't do things that way. Mary and Martha knew their Lord! "Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick."

"He whom thou lovest." Lazarus is loved by the Savior. Paul said, "He loved me" (see [Gal. 2:20](#)). John called himself the disciple whom Jesus loved. Peter declared that Jesus loves us. And by the way, He loves you and He loves me. Anyone who is a child of God is one whom Jesus loves.

When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby [[John 11:4](#)].

Jesus, you see, was not in Bethany at the time, and a message was sent to Him.

Some people say that a Christian should never be sick. Is sickness in the will of God? I wish Lazarus were here to tell you about that. Sickness is not a sign that God does not love you. "For all this I considered in my heart even to declare all this, that the righteous, and the wise, and their works, are in the hand of God: no man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them" ([Eccl. 9:1](#)). In other words, you cannot tell by the circumstances of a man whether God loves him or not. You have no right to judge. "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts . . ." ([1Cor. 4:5](#)). Jesus loved Lazarus when he was sick. Not only that, Jesus will let Lazarus die -- but He still loves him.

Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was [[John 11:5-6](#)].

He loves you when you are sick, He loves you when you are well, He loves you all the time. You can't keep Him from loving you. You may ask why He lets certain difficulties happen to you. I don't know the reason, but I do know He loves you. He loves you whether or not you are a Christian. You can't keep Him from loving you. You can't stop the sun from shining, but you can get out of the sunshine. And you can put up an umbrella to keep the love of God from shining upon your life.

Because He loves us, we are to come with boldness to present our problems to Him. Boldness means freedom of speech, opening your heart to Him. Boldness does not mean that your requests can be demands of God. Trouble tests our faith and puts us on our

knees. Moses cried unto the Lord repeatedly when problems arose in the wilderness wanderings. Hezekiah took the threatening letter from the Assyrians and presented it to the Lord. The disciples of John the Baptist came to the Lord with the heartbreaking news when John was beheaded. My friend, it is down in the valley, even in the valley of the shadow of death, that we must learn to trust Him. He teaches us patience, teaches us that we can rest in Him, teaches us that He works all things well. We need to look beyond the tears, the sorrows, and the trials of life, and see that God has a purpose in everything that happens.

"This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God." Jesus permits this to happen because God will get the glory in it. We need to learn that we are not the center of the universe -- nor is our home, our church, our town. The headquarters of everything are in heaven, and everything is running for His glory. Nothing will come into our lives without His permission, and if He permits it, it is going to be for His glory.

I do want you to notice that the Lord loved Martha. Sometimes we are very hard on Martha, very critical of her. The commentaries haven't been kind to her. She was cumbered with much serving and she hadn't learned the best thing, but that did not keep our Lord from loving her.

Does it seem cruel that Jesus let Lazarus die? No, there is a message here for us. The Lord Jesus was not motivated by sentiment, but He was subject to the Father's will. Human sentiment would urge Him to go to Bethany immediately. But He deliberately let Lazarus die. Friend, sometimes He allows our loved ones to die. We need to recognize that He has a reason, and His ways are perfect. Jesus never moves by sentiment. That is what spoils people and that is how parents spoil their children. He is motivated by love, and that love is for the good of the individual and for the glory of God.

Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judaea again.

His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again? [[John 11:7-8](#)].

Don't miss that word again. He had been there and had been forced to withdraw. Now He returns and takes His disciples with Him into the danger zone.

Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world.

But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him [[John 11:9-10](#)].

There are twelve hours in the day, and you can't change that. Because the Father has given the Son a work to do, nothing can stop Him. There is a great principle here. God has given to each man a lifework. You can't extend that for one day any more than you can keep the sun from going down in the afternoon. But, thank God, you are absolutely invulnerable until your work is done. Nobody, not even Satan, can thwart God's purpose in your life if you are following Him. To fail to follow Him is dangerous. Then one is in darkness because He is the Light of the World. You can go into the danger zone with

Him, and you won't be touched. You will finish your work. But if you stay out in the darkness, if you walk in the darkness, you will stumble. There has been death in Bethany. If there is to be light in that time of darkness, Jesus must go there. He is the Light of the World.

These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.

Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.

Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep.

Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.

And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him [[John 11:11-15](#)].

The disciples did not understand what Jesus meant when He said that Lazarus was sleeping. Because many people today do not understand it either, we find people who talk about soul-sleep. Friend, sleep is for the body, never for the soul. This is true of both sleep in this life and the sleep of death. Death means separation. The body of the believer sleeps in the grave, but the spirit goes to be with Christ. For the believer, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord (see [2Cor. 5:8](#)). Jesus is called the firstfruits of them that sleep. Does this mean that Jesus is sleeping somewhere today? Absolutely not. He is in His glorified body. The believer goes immediately to be with the Lord, but the body sleeps until the day of resurrection when the body will be raised.

Death, for the believer, is a sleep for his body. Are you afraid of sleep? You shouldn't be. Sleep is a relief from labor. It is the rest that comes for renewal and preparation for the new day that is coming. There is nothing quite as beautiful as the word sleep when it is used for the death of a believer. The body is put to sleep, to be awakened by our Lord. He is the only One who has the alarm clock. He is the only One who can raise the dead. One day He will come and we shall awaken in our new bodies.

The Greek word for resurrection is anastasis which means "a standing up." C. S. Lewis, that brilliant Oxford don, ridiculing those who hold that resurrection is spiritual rather than physical, asked, "If it is the spirit that stands up, what position does it take?" There's a question to work over! No, resurrection means a standing up, and it always refers to the body. The soul never dies, nor does the soul ever sleep.

Death is a reality, an awful reality of the body. But, remember, the resurrection is also reality. You see, man leaves off at death. Even in the hospital, there is a finality about death. Doctors will work and work over a patient. Then when he dies, they all stop working. When death comes, they are through. Science is helpless in the presence of death. Where man must leave off, Jesus begins. Resurrection is also reality.

A man in Pasadena told me, "When you die, you die just like a dog." I answered, "Don't you wish that were true? But," I said, "if it's not true (and I think that bothers you a little), you're in trouble, aren't you?" He turned away because he didn't want to talk about that. People are afraid of death.

Mrs. McGee and I were in Wichita, Kansas, for a Bible conference, staying at a large motel there. We had dinner before the evening service and the bar room was loud with the "happy hour." When we returned in the evening, word had arrived that the airplane carrying the football team had gone down. The coach and the first line of football players all had been killed. "Happy hour" was like a morgue then. They were silent, without hope.

Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow-disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him [[John 11:16](#)].

Thomas is a gloom-caster, isn't he? He thinks he is going to die along with Jesus. But, thank God, he was willing to do just that. I believe Thomas meant it, too, just as Simon Peter meant it.

Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already.

Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off:

And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother [[John 11:17-19](#)].

Bethany is about two miles from the Golden Gate at Jerusalem. Many of the Jews walked from Jerusalem to Bethany to be with Martha and Mary. Apparently they were a prominent family in Bethany and were well known in Jerusalem.

Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house.

Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee [[John 11:20-22](#)].

Martha seems always to be the aggressive type. She is the woman of action. She reveals a wonderful faith but also an impatience and a lack of bending to the will of God. By contrast, Mary is willing to sit at home. She has learned to sit at Jesus' feet.

We can see now that Martha should have been sitting at Jesus' feet a little more. She says, "I know that if You will ask God." Martha, don't you realize that He is God? He is God, manifest in the flesh. He has been in your home, sat at your table and has eaten your biscuits, but you didn't realize that He was God, did you? Oh, my friend, how we need to spend time at His feet. How we need to listen.

Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.

Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:



And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? [[John 11:23-26](#)].

Martha believed in a resurrection. But listen, it makes less demand upon faith to believe that in a future day we shall receive glorified bodies than it does to rest now on the assurance that they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. It is easier to believe that the Lord is coming and the dead will be raised than it is to believe that tomorrow I can live for God. It is so easy to comfort people who are mourning and say, "Well, you'll see your loved ones someday." That doesn't take much faith. It takes a lot of faith to say, "I have just lost my loved one but I am comforted with the assurance that God is with me and He does all things well." You see, although Martha knew from the Old Testament that there would be a resurrection from the dead, she didn't believe that Jesus could help her now.

Jesus says to her, "Martha, don't you know that I am the resurrection and the life?" If we have Jesus, we have life. "He that believeth in me, though he were dead" is referring to spiritual death. Though a person is spiritually dead, "yet shall he live." Then He looks into the future and says that the one who has trusted Him shall never die. Life begins at the moment a person accepts the Savior. Whosoever lives and believes in Jesus will never die because Jesus has already died for him. That is, he will never die a penal death for his sins. He will never be separated from God. Then Jesus asks the question: "Believest thou this?"

She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world [[John 11:27](#)].

Martha gives the same confession that Peter gave. She understands that He is the Messiah.

And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee.

As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly and came unto him.

Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him.

The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there [[John 11:28-31](#)].

Although Martha had told Mary secretly, God will overrule this -- the whole crowd will be at the cemetery. They don't know that she is going out to meet Jesus.

Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died [[John 11:32](#)].

She was saying along with Martha that if Jesus had been there, her brother would not have died. This is why Jesus will say later on that it was expedient, it was better, for Him to go away. This incident makes it obvious why it was expedient. As long as He was here

in the flesh, He was limited geographically. If He were in your town, He couldn't be in my town. If Jesus had not gone away, He could not have sent the Comforter, the Holy Spirit. But now that the Holy Spirit has come, He is everywhere. He indwells every believer today. So the Holy Spirit can be where I am, where you are, and on the other side of the world simultaneously. "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you" ([John 16:7](#)).

When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled,

And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see.

Jesus wept [[John 11:33-35](#)].

If you want to know how God feels about the death of your loved ones, look at this. He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. Death is a frightful thing. And you can be sure that He enters into sympathy with you.

His sympathy was for the living. He knew what He was going to do for the dead. "Jesus wept." While John's Gospel is written to show us the deity of Christ, here Jesus is shown in all His humanness. He even asked where Lazarus was laid because He was so human. And here we can see the way God feels at a funeral today. He mingles His tears with ours. He groans within Himself. I get a little impatient with Christians who say one must not cry at a funeral, but one must be a brave Christian. Death is not pretty; it is a terrible thing. Jesus wept!

Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!

And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? [[John 11:36-37](#)].

The Jews missed the point here. He wept, not because He loved Lazarus -- He was not weeping for the dead -- He wept for those who were living.

You notice that the Jews go back to the incident of healing the blind man. That obviously made a great impression on them.

Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.

Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.

Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? [[John 11:38-40](#)].

The subject of death is skirted by people today. The undertakers try in every way to make death seem like a pleasant episode. But let us face it very frankly, we can't cover up death by embalming and painting up the face, dressing the body in a good suit of clothes, then

placing it in a pretty coffin surrounded by flowers. Although this is done to help soften the shock, death is an awful thing.

Martha said that he had been buried for four days already and his body would stink; it would be decaying. Someone may think that sounds crude. So is death crude. It is awful. This case is certainly going to require a miracle.

Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.

And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou has sent me [[John 11:41-42](#)].

Remember that this whole incident is for the glory of God. Jesus prays audibly to let the people know that what He is going to do is the will of the Father so that the Father will get the glory. He voices His prayer for the benefit of those who are present.

And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go [[John 11:43-44](#)].

I want to mention here that I think there were multitudes raised from the dead by Jesus Christ. I think there were multitudes who were healed, hundreds of blind people who received their sight. The Gospels record only a few instances for us.

Notice that for Lazarus, life was restored to the old body. He came out still wrapped in all the graveclothes. When our Lord rose from the dead, He left all the graveclothes in place just as they had been wrapped around His body, including the napkin which had been wrapped around His head. He came right out of them. Why? Because He came out in a glorified body. They didn't need to roll away the stone for Jesus to come out. It was rolled away so the people on the outside could look in and see that the tomb was empty. His glorified body could leave the sealed grave and it could also enter a room with all the doors locked.

There is a beautiful picture of salvation in this. We were dead in trespasses and sins, dead to God, and are now made alive to God in Christ Jesus. But, friend, each of us is being held back by those graveclothes. Paul could say, ". . . For what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. . . O wretched man that I am! . . ." ([Rom. 7:15, 24](#)). This was not an unsaved man talking; this was a believer. Jesus wants us to be free from those graveclothes. He says, "Loose him, and let him go."

Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.

But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done [[John 11:45-46](#)].

These men cannot ignore this miracle.

It may surprise you to learn that this is the end of the public ministry of Jesus when you see that we are only near the halfway mark in the Gospel of John. His public ministry began when John the Baptist marked Him out as the Lamb of God. It concluded when He raised Lazarus from the dead. John, you see, spent almost as much time on the last forty-eight hours before His death as he did on the first thirty-two years, eleven months, three weeks, and five days of His life. As a matter of fact, this is the pattern shared by all the Gospel writers. They placed the emphasis on the last eight days. There are eighty-nine chapters in the four Gospels. Four of these chapters cover the first thirty years of the life of Jesus and eighty-five chapters the last three years of His life. Of those eighty-five chapters, twenty-seven deal with the last eight days of His life. So about one-third of the Gospel records deal with the last few days and place the emphasis on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Friend, it is a misrepresentation of the gospel if the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are not preeminent. In fact, that comprises the gospel (see [1Cor. 15:1-4](#)). The Gospel writers did what Paul also did later on. He says, "For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" ([1Cor. 2:2](#)).

You would think that this crowning miracle would have turned these skeptics to Jesus, but it did not. Our Lord had said previously, you remember, ". . . If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" ([Luke 16:31](#)). That is the reason that God does not rend the heavens and come down in spectacular display. That is the reason God does not go about performing miracles today. After the church leaves the earth, during the Great Tribulation period, and into the Millennium, there will be a period of great miracles, but even that will not convince people. Today we are asked in a quiet way to put our trust in Him even though the mob and the majority turn from Him. People complain that the crowd isn't going after Jesus. Friend, it never did! He died, He was buried, He rose again from the dead, and that is the gospel. We don't need a miracle. The problem is not in the lack of evidence. The problem is the unbelief of man.

Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles [[John 11:47](#)].

You can see here that the problem for these bloodhounds of hate was not a lack of evidence. His enemies said, "He doeth many miracles." They couldn't deny His miracles.

This is a diabolical group. The chief priests at this time were largely Sadducees who were the "liberals" in that they did not accept miracles or the supernatural -- which included resurrection. The Pharisees were the religious conservatives and the political rightists of that day. The two parties were absolutely opposed to each other in every way; yet here they join together in their hatred of Jesus Christ and in their determination to put Him to death. You might label this the first ecumenical movement. If men can get rid of Jesus Christ, they will join with even those of opposing views in their antagonism toward Him. This is the trend of the hour. The majority is attempting to get rid of Christ as He is revealed in the Word of God. It is the minority that accepts Jesus Christ as He is.

If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation [[John 11:48](#)].

They feared there would be a mass turning to Jesus Christ which would bring a revolution. This would provide an occasion for Rome to pounce on them. They moved from a basis of fear. Fear is the motivation which keeps a great many people away from Jesus today. Even in our churches Christians lack the intestinal fortitude to stand on their two feet for the truth of Scripture and for men who teach it as the Word of God.

And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all,

Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.

And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation;

And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad [[John 11:49-52](#)].

They begin to rationalize and say that Jesus should die rather than the nation die at the hand of Rome. It is interesting to note that although they did succeed in putting Jesus to death, in spite of this, the nation perished when Titus destroyed it in B.C. 70.

We find a strange thing here: Caiaphas' accurate prediction because he was high priest that year! Caiaphas was a scheming politician, and later we will meet his father-in-law Annas, who was also a mean rascal and the power behind the throne. That Caiaphas had the gift of prophecy should not fool us. Like Balaam in the Old Testament, this rascal could utter a true prophecy.

Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death.

Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples [[John 11:53-54](#)].

This is the beginning of the end, friend. They are openly trying to put Jesus to death and are openly hostile. We don't know exactly where the city Ephraim is. It was probably out in rather wild country.

And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves.

Then sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feast?

Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where he were, he should shew it, that they might take him [[John 11:55-57](#)].

The crowds come to Jerusalem to purify themselves before the Passover. As they go through this endless ritual and rub shoulders with each other, there are differences of opinion and talk about Jesus. They wonder whether Jesus will come to the feast this year. They know the Sanhedrin is really after Him. You see, if they will not believe Moses, they will not believe even though one rose from the dead.

At this point John's Gospel has reached the breaking point. We are approaching the last week of the earthly life of the Lord Jesus Christ.

## Chapter 12

**THEME:** Witness of Jew and Gentile to Jesus; Jesus comes to Bethany for supper; Jesus comes to Jerusalem -- tearful entry; Jesus comes to Greeks; Jesus comes to His hour; Jesus comes to end of His public ministry

### **Witness Of Jew And Gentile To Jesus (12:1)**

As we come to this twelfth chapter, we are going with Jesus to make a visit to a home, the home of Lazarus, Mary, and Martha of Bethany. In this Gospel of John, He opened His public ministry at a wedding in Cana of Galilee; He closes His public ministry by a visit to this home. Our Lord put an emphasis upon the home, the Christian home, the godly home. Marriage has the blessing of God upon it. So we come now to this lovely picture.

### **Jesus Comes To Bethany For Supper (12:1-11)**

Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.

There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.

Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment [[John 12:1-3](#)].

In Jerusalem they were plotting and planning His death but, here in Bethany, His friends plan a dinner party for Him. Right in the shadow of the Cross, those who loved Him made Him a dinner. We want to study the whole picture of this lovely dinner.

Lazarus, the man who has been raised from the dead was in fellowship with Christ. Jesus had said, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" ([John 11:25](#)). This was true of Lazarus in a physical sense. He had been raised from the dead. It is true of you and of me in a spiritual sense. We were dead in trespasses and sins. We had no knowledge of Him nor did we have any fellowship with Him. So for us He said, "And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" ([John 11:26](#)).

What a picture we have here! There is Lazarus alive from the dead and in fellowship with Christ. Then we see Mary sitting at Jesus' feet, growing in grace and in the knowledge of Christ. Then, thirdly, we see Martha serving, putting on a meal. That is her gift and she is exercising it. These are the three essentials in the church today: new life in Christ, worship and adoration, and service. This home at Bethany should be a picture of your church and mine.

All this is in the home where Jesus is with His own. As you know, the church began in the home. It may end in the home. Many of our churches are turning away from God and the things of God. They are no longer places of delightful fellowship and blessing. So perhaps the church will return to homes where true fellowship with Christ will be found.

Then we notice the devotion and adoration, the unutterable attachment and deep affection of this woman, Mary. She anointed the feet of Jesus with costly spikenard and wiped them with her hair. Some people think this is the same story as the harlot who washed Jesus' feet. I think you will have trouble with Mary someday if you think that. She is an altogether different person. The only thing that is the same in both cases is that the hair was used to wipe His feet. The odor of the ointment filled the house. Delightful!

Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him,

Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?

This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein [[John 12:4-6](#)].

Judas Iscariot is revealing his true nature. He is the treasurer of the group. He doesn't care for the poor; he cares for himself -- he is a thief. He was taking some money out on the sly. He wants Mary's money given to the poor so he can handle it and take out his percentage.

May I say to you today, the real test of a Christian, the hard-coin test, is the way he handles his finances. The real test of a church or a Christian organization is the way it handles its finances. Is the money used for the cause for which it was given, or is it shifted and used in some other way?

Three hundred pence was the annual wage of a laboring man of that day. Because the spikenard was too costly for Mary to use on herself, she poured it all out on Jesus. Friend, if we would learn to sit at His feet, we would give more to Him, too. Mary had saved this precious ointment in an alabaster box. It came out of India, where the herbs grow high in the Himalayas, and was very expensive. Do you know why she had bought it and saved it? So that when she died it could be used on her body! Now she pours it all out on Him. This is absolute affection, adoration, and attachment to His Person. The odor of that ointment filled the house, and it still fills the world today.

Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this.



For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always  
[[John 12:7-8](#)].

This is a really remarkable incident. The Lord here reveals that this woman anoints Him to let Him know that she enters into His death. She senses that He is to die for the sins of the world and she anoints Him ahead of time. Matthew recorded that Jesus said that wherever the gospel would be preached, this incident would be told. This is true. Even today the wonderful fragrance of this thing that she did fills the world.

What a contrast we find here between her and Judas Iscariot. Here is where light and darkness are coming together. Judas is the darkness and Mary is the light.

There is an application for us today. Jesus says that the poor are always with us and that He will not always be with us. He is not contradicting His statement that He is with us always, that He will never leave us nor forsake us. What He is saying here is that we can always be of service to the poor -- but they are always with us -- but that our service should not be a substitute for sitting at His feet. There comes a day when it is too late to absorb all He has for us. I get letters saying, "Dr. McGee, I never had Bible teaching; if only I had had Bible teaching when I was young." My friend, learn about Him now. Do not substitute activity for sitting at His feet.

Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.

But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death;

Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus [[John 12:9-11](#)].

These people are curiosity seekers. The chief priests wanted to get Lazarus out of the way. I personally believe that the people came out of curiosity to see Lazarus rather than to see Jesus and that the faith described here is much like the faith exhibited when Jesus first came up to Jerusalem. Remember that they believed on Him, but He would not commit Himself to them. It was a belief based on curiosity.

### **Jesus Comes To Jerusalem -- Tearful Entry (12:12-19)**

On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem [[John 12:12](#)].

Notice how John gears this One who came out of eternity into the calendar of the world. It is the time before the Feast of the Passover, and the crowd is expectant. Remember that in Matthew's record Jesus was born and sought by the wise men who called Him the King of the Jews. Now, at the end of His ministry, He is again presented as the King of the Jews.

Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.

And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written,

Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt [[John 12:13-15](#)].

This is the public offer of Himself as their King and the rulers, of course, reject it. He is no longer mixing among the people and teaching them. That had already ceased. This is now an act which He performs as a fulfillment of prophecy. He is offering Himself to the nation. This is not really a triumphal entry. He came in through the sheep gate, quietly, during His public ministry. All through His public ministry, He tended to withdraw from the crowds. Now, when His public ministry is over, He does the most public thing He has ever done. He steps out publicly and presents Himself.

He does this to fulfill prophecy. "As it is written." He rides into Jerusalem to fulfill the Word of God and to fulfill the will of God. John gives us a very brief account of this entry of Jesus, but he does say that it fulfills the prophecy of [Zechariah 9:9](#): "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." Jesus presents Himself publicly to Jerusalem as the Messiah. They acclaim Him with "Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord." What will Israel do with their King? They will crucify Him.

These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him [[John 12:16](#)].

John is writing this many years later, and he admits that he didn't understand what Jesus was doing that day. Probably he asked James and Peter and Andrew, and they didn't understand either. Mary was the only one who had entered into His death. The others didn't understand until after His death and resurrection. "When Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him."

The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record.

For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle.

The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him [[John 12:17-19](#)].

Here is a situation loaded with dynamite. The crowd is enthusiastic because of His miracle; their interest is centered on Lazarus and not on the person of Christ. The Pharisees are out to kill Him. Jerusalem is crowded with people for the feast.

Obviously, Jesus Christ could have had the crown without first going to the Cross. However, if He had gone directly to the crown, if He were the ruler today, you and I would never have been saved. He had to go to the Cross to save you and me. Although this was a brief moment of triumph before His death, it was not His triumphal entry. In

the future when He enters as Lord of lords and King of kings, that will be His triumphal entry.

My favorite painting of the Crucifixion shows three empty crosses. The bodies of the crucified have been taken down from the crosses and lie in the tombs. In the background is a little donkey eating on a palm frond. What a message! The discarded palm branch and the Cross are the tokens of His so-called triumphal entry. Where is the crowd that cried, "Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord"? They may be the same crowd that on the next day shouted, "Crucify Him!" Now they are gone, and He is in the tomb. You see, He offered Himself to them publicly as their King, but He was rejected.

### **Jesus Comes To Greeks (12:20-26)**

And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast:

The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.

Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus [[John 12:20-22](#)].

Apparently Jesus has gone into the temple. Since there is a court for the women and a court for the Gentiles, these Greeks cannot go in where Jesus is. Philip has a Greek name and may have spoken Greek, which is probably the reason they came to him. Philip is a modest and retiring fellow and he goes to Andrew for help. Together they bring the Greeks to Jesus.

And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit [[John 12:23-24](#)].

When our Lord says "verily," He is about to say something very important to hear. And when He says, "verily, verily," it is of supreme importance.

He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal [[John 12:25](#)].

"Jesus answered them" -- I think "them" includes both the disciples and the Greeks. It seems that Jesus went out to speak to them. I do not believe He would refuse to come to anyone who was asking for Him.

The Greeks want to see Jesus because they had heard about Him, probably about His miracles, and especially His raising of Lazarus from the dead. Now He directs the attention of the Greeks to His Cross. He is in the shadow of the Cross. He tells them, "The hour is come." What hour? The hour of crisis for which He came out of eternity and toward which His entire life has moved. You remember that He had said to His mother early in His ministry, "mine hour is not yet come" ([John 2:4](#)). Now His hour is come. He is going to the Cross.

His conception of the Cross was far different from that held by the Roman populace. To them it was an instrument of infamy and disgrace and shame. It was the hangman's noose, the electric chair, and the gas chamber. He became obedient to death, even the death of the Cross. Why? "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" ([Gal. 3:13](#)). Then on the third day He was raised from the dead and crowned with glory and honor ". . . for the joy that was set before him [he] endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" ([Heb. 12:2](#)). The glory of God is seen in that Cross. That is why He could say that the time had come for Him to be glorified. Friend, He was glorified when He died for you and me. He was glorified when He came forth from that tomb. Mercy and pardon and forgiveness are found at that Cross.

Then our Lord states a great principle using the physical analogy of a grain of wheat. Although a grain of wheat in the ground dies, it produces the blade, the ear, and the harvest. It must die to bring forth fruit. Many people think they have seen Jesus because they have read the Gospels and they have studied His life. They see the historical Jesus, but they have never seen Jesus until they comprehend His death and His resurrection. He died a redemptive death. He gave His life in death so that we might have life. You haven't seen Jesus until you have seen that He is the One who died for you on the Cross. He is the One who died for the sins of the world.

This seems a strange thing to be saying to the Greeks who had come to see Him. He is telling them that there is more than just seeing Him physically. The important thing for them to see is that He is going to die. He is going to be put into the ground. When that grain of wheat died, it produced life. He died, but He rose again. That is so important to see.

He goes on to explain a great axiom to the Greeks. There are two kinds of life and they are put in contrast here. There is what is known as the psychological life, the life of the psyche, life that enjoys the things of this world and finds satisfaction in the gratification of the senses. It is the kind of life that really whoops it up down here. "He that loveth his life" refers to this physical, natural life that we have. You can really live it up, drink it up, take drugs, paint the town red, but do you know what is going to happen? One day you are going to die. You'll lose it. I'm sorry, but you will lose it, friend.

I heard of a sensational preacher down in Texas who was asked to preach at the funeral of a rich man of the town who had been a church member but had broken every law of God and man and was living in sin and in drunkenness. This was in the oil section of Texas and a lot of rich people, the fast crowd, the jet set, came to the funeral. Now this preacher did something I wouldn't do, but maybe I should do it, although I never have done it. He preached a gospel message! Then he stepped down to the casket and he preached on what sin will do for an individual and that it will finally send a man to hell. I tell you, the folks were getting uneasy. Then when he invited them to view the remains, he said, "His life is past; he lived it up; he is through. He despised God and he turned his back on Jesus Christ." Then he looked at that crowd and said, "This is the way each one of you is going to end up unless you turn to Jesus Christ." Now, friend, that is making it very plain -- maybe a little too plain.

We do need to tell it like it is. This is what our Lord says. "He that loveth his life shall lose it." That is, if you live it up down here, you'll lose it. Then our Lord makes a contrast. "He that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." This means that if you do not live for this world or for the things of this world, you keep your life unto life eternal. And eternal life comes from what? It comes through the death of that grain of wheat that fell onto the ground and rose again, the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the way you can save your life -- the only way you can save it.

If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour [[John 12:26](#)].

He tells them to follow Him, and He is on His way to the Cross. He promises that where He is, His servants will also be. "If any man serve me, him will my Father honour."

### **Jesus Comes To His Hour (12:27-36)**

Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour [[John 12:27](#)].

There is a suffering that is connected with the Cross of Christ that you and I cannot comprehend. He didn't suffer at the hands of men only. That was bad enough, but He suffered beyond that. Your sin and my sin were put upon Him. He was "... a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief . . ." ([Isa. 53:3](#)) there on the Cross. He bore the sin of the world, not His own sin. "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows . . ." ([Isa. 53:4](#)). Our sin was put upon Him. He was made sin for us -- not in some academic manner -- He actually was made sin for us. "Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief . . . [He made] his soul an offering for sin" ([Isa. 53:10](#)). Although He was holy and undefiled and separate from sinners, He was made sin for you and for me. This involved a suffering that you and I cannot comprehend.

But none of the ransomed ever knew  
How deep were the waters crossed;  
Or how dark was the night that the Lord passed through  
Ere He found  
His sheep that was lost. "The Ninety and Nine" -- Elizabeth C. Clephane

His soul stood in horror; He was aghast before that Cross. Yet He had come into the world for the purpose of going to the Cross and enduring the shame of it. Also there was glory in the Cross, friend. We ought to think more about it and thank Him more. Paul says, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" ([Gal. 6:14](#)).

Do you see how this ties in with the two preceding verses? Our Lord is facing the supreme sacrifice -- shortly He will give His life as a ransom for the human family. And He has put this challenge to those who are following Him: "He that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me." You can tell where a person is going by the way that person is living. Someone may say, "I thought we are saved by faith -- you always emphasize faith rather than works." That's right. I surely do. If you are going to be saved, you will have to put your trust in Him -- "... Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved . . ." ([Acts 16:31](#)). But I want

to say that if you truly trust Him, it is going to change your life. If it doesn't change your life, then you aren't really trusting Him.

When I see a Christian who mortgages every dime he has just to own every gadget to live in luxury down here, I wonder how he can be waiting for the Lord to come, and hoping for it with real anticipation. "He that loveth his life shall lose it."

Notice also how this ties in with His saying, "Where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour." It is not a question of the Lord going with us, but of our being where the Lord is. One man said to me, "Well, you know, I'm a member of a liberal church, but I take the Lord with me." My friend, I have news for you. The Lord doesn't go to church there. The Lord is not going to go your way. You are to go where the Lord is.

Our salvation is not cheap. This "hour" is repulsive to our Lord. If it were possible, He would want the Father to spare Him from the horror of being made sin, although He knows this is the reason He came into the world. Then He says, "Father, glorify thy name."

Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again [[John 12:28](#)].

His supreme desire is the glory of God. What a lesson that is for us! We tend to whimper and cry and complain and ask God why He lets unpleasant things happen to us. With Christ, we should learn to say, "Father, through this suffering and through this pain, glorify Thyself."

Heaven couldn't remain silent but had to respond. God answered audibly. Have you noticed that God spoke to Him from out of heaven on three occasions: at the beginning, midway, and at the end of His ministry? Have you noticed that all three occasions are related to the death of Christ? The first was at His baptism when He was identifying Himself with sinful humanity. The second time was at His transfiguration when Elijah, Moses, and the Lord Jesus were talking about His decease which He should accomplish in Jerusalem (see [Luke 9:30-31](#)). This third time, at the conclusion of His ministry, the Lord is talking about His death because His hour has come.

The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him.

Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes [[John 12:29-30](#)].

Now which group was right? Neither was right. It wasn't an angel; it was the Father speaking to Him. One group did believe it was supernatural; they knew it was articulate. They knew about the ministry of angels in the Old Testament and understood that God's messages for man generally came through "the angel of the Lord." They did not, however, understand that "the angel of the Lord" was the pre-incarnate Christ. They did acknowledge that the voice from heaven brought a message from God.



The other group said it thundered. They gave it a natural explanation. That is the same reaction many people still have today. They say God's Word is full of errors and the miracles recorded can't be accurate. Because they don't believe in them, they say it just "thundered." Some folk who were attending a Bible class where they were listening to my tapes on Revelation were told by a liberal preacher that nobody could understand the Book of Revelation, that it didn't make sense. He revealed his own ignorance because the Book of Revelation is a very logical book and probably the most systematic book in the Bible. But, you see, to him it was thunder. It was just noise.

The Word of God says that His birth was supernatural. His life was filled with miracles, and His death was like a grain of wheat. He didn't stay in the ground, friend; He came up just like the grain of wheat. The liberal who said, "The bones of Jesus sleep somewhere beneath Syrian skies" has a problem on his hands. Where are the bones? Christ's resurrection was not spiritual but actual. It was His body that was raised -- His bones just don't happen to be anywhere on earth. Yet, this is the same old gag that has been used down through the years, "it thundered." It is no mark of intelligence to say that. We need spiritual perception and appreciation to hear and to know and to see the Word of God. We need to recognize that the Spirit of God must enlighten us when we come to the Word of God.

Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

This he said, signifying what death he should die [[John 12:31-33](#)].

Christ's death on the Cross was the judgment of the world and of the prince of this world. That is one of the things the Holy Spirit will bear witness to, according to [John 16:7-11](#). We live in a world that is judged. He came to die a judgment death for the sins of the world. If the world will not accept this, the world is judged.

How is Satan, the prince of this world, cast out? I believe it is done gradually. When Christ died on the Cross, I am convinced that Satan did not understand what was happening. What he thought would be a defeat turned out to be a victory. He lost the battle at the Cross which is the reason the Lord can say that the prince of this world is cast out. Then in [Revelation 12:10](#) we are told that Satan will be cast out of heaven, which is the second stage. Then in [Revelation 20:3](#), he will be cast into the bottomless pit, and in [Revelation 20:10](#), he will be cast into the lake of fire. That is the last stage of his defeat. At the Cross, his doom was sealed. The Cross marks the victory of Christ and the defeat of Satan.

Jesus puts the emphasis on His redemptive death. His death will draw all men unto Him. Those who believe will be saved. Those who reject Him will be lost.

Consider how important it is to lift up Jesus before men, to put the emphasis on His redemptive death. There are multitudes passing by the church today who are not hearing the Word. Think of the laborers, the students, the men in the uniform of our country, the white-collar group, the rich. They do not hear. Jesus, the crucified Lord, is not being



lifted up in the churches today. Friend, the gospel needs to be preached, and the gospel is about a Christ who was crucified.

The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man? [[John 12:34](#)].

The crowd is really confused. They say, "When Christ comes, He will reign forever, and now You say that You are not abiding but are going to die." They just did not understand. What was wrong?

Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.

While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them [[John 12:35-36](#)].

Jesus now withdraws and this ends His public ministry. He will never appear publicly again until He comes to this earth to establish His Kingdom.

### **Jesus Comes To The End Of His Public Ministry (12:37-50)**

But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him:

That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?

Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again,

He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.

These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him [[John 12:37-41](#)].

Now we learn what was wrong. Although they were standing in the presence of the Light of the World, they would not open their eyes. The prophecy of Isaiah was being fulfilled. This quotes the great redemptive chapter of [Isaiah 53](#) which speaks of the death of Christ. Christ's death was presented to them, and they rejected Him. They were blinded to the light which was being presented to them. They were like a man who wakes up in the morning and says to himself, "Today I won't see and I will keep my eyes closed all day." He is just as blind as the man who cannot see. The next quotation is from Isaiah, chapter 6. You may point out that it says, "He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart." That is very true, but this must be taken in its context. Jesus has presented Himself to them as the Messiah and as their King. They have rejected Jesus personally. Now He rejects them! Listen to me carefully. Because they would not accept Him, there came the day when they could not accept Him. My friend, the most dangerous thing in the world is to hear the gospel and then turn your back on it. If you just go on listening and listening

and do not accept it and act upon it, there comes the time when you cannot hear and you cannot see. God is God, and it is He who has the final word.

Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue:

For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God [[John 12:42-43](#)].

That is unfortunate. They were like secret believers today who are cowards. However, we will find two of these secret believers taking down the body of Jesus from the cross.

Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me.

And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me.

I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness [[John 12:44-46](#)].

Jesus repeats His amazing statement that He is the Light of the World. This is an extension of the time that He opened the eyes of the blind man. He will open the eyes of any who are willing to admit that they are blind and that they need the Light of the World.

And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.

He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.

And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak [[John 12:47-50](#)].

Friend, we are going to be judged by the Word of God. We will not be judged by our little good works. We will not be judged by what we think religion is. No, we will be judged by the Word of God. Jesus came the first time as the Savior: "I came not to judge the world, but to save the world." The next time He will come as the Judge. The voice from heaven is still saying to us, ". . . This is my beloved Son . . . hear ye him" ([Matt. 17:5](#)).

This concludes this section of the Gospel of John. Men had turned their backs on that voice; they had rejected the King. When they had done this, the King rejected them. He is always the King!

## Chapter 13

**THEME:** Jesus washes feet of disciples

We come now to the fourth main division of this Gospel. We first studied the prologue, which was the first eighteen verses of chapter 1. Then we had the introduction, which was the remainder of the first chapter. We have seen the Witness of His Works and of His Words from chapters 2 to 12. Now we come to the Witness of Jesus to His Witnesses, chapters 13 to 17.

There is another way in which we could divide this Gospel. In the first twelve chapters the subject is light. They tell of His public ministry and that He is the Light. The division which we call the Upper Room Discourse is about the subject of love. He loves His own. The last part of the Gospel, from chapters 18 to 21, is about life. He came to bring us life, and that life is in Himself. Our life comes through His death.

The Lord Jesus gave four major discourses. Three of these have already been studied in the Gospel of Matthew: the Sermon on the Mount ([Matt. 5](#) -- [Matt. 7](#)); the Mystery Parables Discourse ([Matt. 13](#)), telling us about the Kingdom of Heaven; and the Olivet Discourse ([Matt. 24](#); [Matt. 25](#)). Now we come to the Upper Room Discourse which is recorded in [John 13](#) -- [John 17](#).

This discourse is one of the greatest that our Lord ever gave. It is the longest, and it is meaningful for us today because He took His own into the Upper Room and revealed new truths to them. It is still brand new and fresh for us today. There is nothing quite like it. His public ministry has ended, and He has been rejected. Now He talks about His love for us, how we are to live the Christian life, of the provision He has made for us, and of the relationships between Him and those who are His own. As He is on His way to the Cross, He has no message for the Pharisees or the religious rulers or the Roman government. This message is for His own.

### **Jesus Washes Feet Of Disciples (13:1-38)**

We come now to a most unusual incident. I wish I could shock you, startle you with it. We hear it so often that we lose the wonder of it. Jesus Christ leaves heaven's glory and comes down to this earth and He takes the place of a slave and washes feet!

In the preceding chapter, you will remember, we saw that the feet of Jesus were anointed. Here, the feet of the disciples are washed. What a difference! As the Savior passed through this sinful world, He contacted no defilement whatsoever. He was holy, harmless, and undefiled. The feet speak of the walk of a person, and the anointing of Jesus' feet with spikenard tells of the sweet savor of the walk of our Lord.

The disciples' feet needed washing! Jesus washed their feet with water, not with blood. That is important to see. I hear many people talking about coming anew to the fountain filled with blood and being cleansed. This dishonors our Lord. The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from all sin -- past, present, and future -- in one application. There is only one sacrifice. "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" ([Heb. 10:14](#)). When you and I came as sinners to Christ Jesus, it was His shed blood that once and for all cleansed us and gave us a standing before God. But, my friend, we need to be purified along the pilgrim pathway; in our walk through the world

we get dirty, and we need washing. We shall see that our Lord washed His disciples' feet for this very definite purpose.

There is a threefold reason given to explain why He washed their feet, and we shall note this as we read.

Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him [[John 13:1-2](#)].

Jesus washed their feet because He knew that He would "depart out of this world." His ministry would continue after He went back to heaven. He has identified Himself with His people, and today He still washes the feet of His disciples. He says that He will depart out of this "world" (kosmos), meaning the world system. It is man's world, a world of sin. It is a civilization that is anti-God and anti-Christ, and it is under judgment. Because He is leaving this world, He washes their feet.

The second reason He does this is that He loved His own. He loved them "unto the end." He is going to the Father because He loved His own. He died to save His own, and He lives to keep them saved. We have a wonderful Savior, and He loves us right on through to the very end. God loves us with an everlasting love; we cannot keep Him from loving us.

The third reason is that another person had entered into the room. There was an uninvited guest present. His name was Satan. We speak of thirteen persons in the Upper Room, but actually, there were fourteen because Satan was there. Satan put into the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray Him. Wherever the Devil gets into Christian work, others are affected and the Lord must wash them. He must wash us if we are to have fellowship with Him.

Notice that this took place at the Feast of the Passover. "Supper being ended" is literally "supper being in progress." This is not the Lord's Supper. Actually John does not even record the Lord's Supper. Why does John omit something so important? I think it is because at the time John wrote, there were already Christians who were making a ritual out of the Lord's Supper. There is a great danger in putting importance on a ritual rather than on the person Jesus Christ. It is more important to know the Word of God than it is to partake of Communion. There is no blessing in Communion apart from a knowledge of the Word of God. An apologetics professor, whom I had, said that it was Christ in your heart and bread in your tummy. The bread in your tummy won't be there long; Christ in your heart is the essential. I believe that is why John omits telling about the Lord's Supper.

Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God [[John 13:3](#)].

A better translation would be, "Since Jesus knew that the Father had given all things into His hands, that He was come from God, and that He is going to God." It is restated that what He is doing is because He is returning to the Father. That is important.

He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.

After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded [[John 13:4-5](#)].

He lays aside His outer garment; that is, He takes off the robe that He is wearing. Then He takes a linen cloth, and He girds Himself with it. This is such a strange thing which He does. He takes the place of a servant. He is girded with the towel of service, and He is ready to wash their feet.

In studying [Exodus 21](#), we learn of a law regarding slaves. A Hebrew slave served his master six years, and he could go free on the seventh year. If, during that time, he had taken a wife and had had children, the master would free him but not his family. However, the slave could choose to stay. If he loved his master and his family, he could stay with them. Then the master would back him up to a door post and bore his ear with an awl which would identify him as a voluntary slave forever. Although he could have gone out free, he stayed because of love. Our Lord Jesus came down to this earth, took upon Himself our humanity, and was made in the likeness of a servant. He did all this because He loved us. He could have gone out free, but He died on the Cross to provide salvation for us. He did this to establish a wonderful relationship for us and to make it possible for us to have fellowship with Him. He has become a slave because He loves us.

Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?

Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter [[John 13:6-7](#)].

Some people say that this is a sacrament and that we should practice foot washing. I see nothing wrong with practicing this if the spiritual meaning is not lost. Others say that this is a lesson in humility and is an example to us. There is nothing wrong with that interpretation, but I do not think it goes deep enough. Peter certainly could see this was an example of humility; yet the Lord said, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter."

Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me [[John 13:8](#)].

What did our Lord mean by that? He meant that without this washing there can be no fellowship with Him. This is the Passover Feast which speaks of His death. He arose from the Passover Feast which speaks of His rising in resurrection and going back to heaven. He is girded with the towel of service and He is saying to us, "If I don't wash you, you'll have no part with me." You cannot have fellowship with him, service with Him, without the washing.

How does Christ wash us today? "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word" ([Ps. 119:9](#)). "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" ([John 15:3](#)). ". . . even as Christ also loved the

church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word" ([Eph. 5:25-26](#)). It is the Word of God that will keep the believer clean. And when we sin, how are we cleansed? "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" ([1John 1:9](#)). Too many people treat sin as a light matter. My friend, may I say to you, the feet speak of the walk, and when you and I become disobedient, we are not walking in His way. That is sin, and that needs to be confessed.

Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head [[John 13:9](#)].

He at first pulls his feet up; then when our Lord says he won't have fellowship with Him, he sticks out his feet -- big old fisherman's feet -- and he holds out his hands -- and they have been strong, calloused hands -- and he even held down his head, and said, "not just my feet, but also wash my hands, wash my head." If it means fellowship, Peter wants all he can get of that.

Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all [[John 13:10](#)].

Now He says, "He that's washed needeth not to be washed." That doesn't make good sense, does it? The reason it doesn't is that He used two different words and, unfortunately, the translators didn't make the distinction (nor do our more recent translations make the distinction), but they are absolutely two different words. He says, ". . . He that is louo." Louo means "bathed." Nipto is the word translated "wash." "He that is bathed needeth not except to wash his feet."

In those days they went to the public bath for their bathing. Then a man would put on his sandals to come home. In his home was a basin of water for him to wash his feet because they had gotten dirty walking through the streets of the city. Not only was there dirt, but in those days the garbage was thrown into the streets. So even though he had just come from a bath, he had to wash his feet when he entered the house.

Our Lord is teaching that when we came to the Cross, when we came to Jesus, we were washed all over. That is the bath, louo, regeneration. When we walk through this world, we are defiled and get dirty. We become disobedient, and sin gets into our lives. I do not believe that any believer goes through a day without getting just a little dirty. He says that we cannot have fellowship with Him if we are dirty. So the washing of the feet, nipto, is the cleansing in order to restore us to fellowship. "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us [keeps on cleaning us] from all sin" ([1John 1:6-7](#)).

Friend, in order to have our feet washed we must first confess our sin. To confess means to agree with God. It means to say the same thing that God says about our sin. One of the hardest things in the world is to get a saint to admit he is a sinner. Coldness, indifference, lack of love, all are seen by God as sin. If we confess, He is faithful and just to forgive. But that is not all. If you are going to have your feet washed, you must put them into the hands of the Savior. That is obedience. We can't just say, "God forgive me, I did wrong,"

and then go out and do the same thing all over again. That's not getting your feet into the hands of the Savior.

For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean [[John 13:11](#)].

Jesus knew that Judas would betray Him. He knew that Judas had not taken a bath. In other words, Judas had never been regenerated. That is why He said they were not all clean.

So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?

Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.

If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them [[John 13:12-17](#)].

If you want joy in your life today, Christian friend, go to Him and confess. This is one of the problems in our Christian congregations today. We may have our heads full of doctrine, but our feet smell. Brother, there is nothing that smells as bad as unwashed feet! Maybe that is the reason some of our services don't smell so good. That is the reason we don't reach more people for Christ. We need to confess in order to have fellowship with Christ.

Jesus said that as He had washed their feet, so they were to wash one another's feet. What does that mean? Paul tells us in Galatians how we are to do that. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" ([Gal. 6:1](#)). That is, when a brother in Christ falls into sin, he is to be brought back into fellowship by one who is spiritual. Beating him on the head and criticizing him is not washing his feet, friend. To restore him means to wash his feet. In the church we have all sorts of talent -- excellent speakers and beautiful music -- but there is no revival. We need foot washing; we need to be cleansed. Before we can wash the feet of a brother, we need first to have the Lord of glory wash our feet. We should come to Him every time that we are dirty and be cleansed by Him.

The psalmist says, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" ([Ps. 139:23-24](#)). There is not a one of us who goes through a day without some sin. We need to confess that to the Lord and be cleansed. We are washed by the Word of God. We put our feet into His hands, which means that we are completely yielded to Him. This



places us in fellowship with the Lord Jesus. Friend, don't let a single day go by without this fellowship. Don't let sin come in to break this fellowship with Him.

The disciples were like a group of children in that Upper Room. They were frightened, and rightly so. The shadow of the Cross had fallen upon that little group.

I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me [[John 13:18](#)].

Jesus is very careful to tell them that He does not speak of all of them. He has just told them they are happy if they do these things, but there is one man among them who cannot do them. Do you know why? He has not believed. Jesus has already told them that all of them are not clean. Jesus had said, "Ye call me Master and Lord." A master is a teacher and he is to be believed. A lord is to be obeyed. Faith and obedience must go together. Saving, living faith leads to obedience. Judas did not have this faith.

Jesus quotes [Psalm 41:9](#): ". . . which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me." He is referring to Judas. It is not a question of this man losing his spiritual life. It is rather a revelation that he never had a spiritual life! He is not a sheep who has become unclean; he is a pig that has returned to its wallowing again, or a dog that has returned to its vomit. That is the picture of Judas Iscariot. Yet, he was there in the Upper Room and this man got his feet washed. He received the washing by the Word of God, and he rejected it totally.

Let us go over this again so it is very clear. The blood of Jesus Christ is the Godward side of His sacrifice. The blood is for the expiation of our sin. The blood has cancelled all my guilt and has washed out that awful, black account which was against me. It has given me a standing before God because it has blotted out all my transgressions. The blood is for penal expiation. The cleansing by the water is the manward aspect of it. This is for our moral purification. After we have our standing before God on the ground of the blood of Jesus Christ, the water of the Word gives us our moral purification in our daily walk.

Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he [[John 13:19](#)].

Jesus tells them that one of them will "lift up his heel" against Him so that when it happens, they will not be shocked. Then they cannot say it was a pity Jesus didn't know about it. Have you ever noticed that the Lord Jesus is betrayed from the inside? This is still true today. People complain about the sin outside the church, but that doesn't hurt the church. In fact, some of those sinners get saved. The hurt comes when Jesus Christ is betrayed on the inside.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me [[John 13:20](#)].

Jesus adds this because Judas had been sent on missions with the rest of the disciples. He had preached and he had healed. "He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me." No one is saved by the faith of the messenger or preacher. We are saved by hearing the Word of God and receiving Christ. If

a Western Union boy brings you a telegram that a rich uncle has died and left you a fortune, the fact that the Western Union boy may be a thief doesn't invalidate the message of the telegram, does it?

I knew a preacher who had become an unbeliever. A man who drove me to the train said to me, "Dr. McGee, I am puzzled. I was saved under the ministry of that man. I know I am saved and I know I am a child of God but I am puzzled. How can you explain it?" I showed this man this very text and told him that even Judas had gone out preaching and had won converts, not because he was Judas, but because he had given the message. God will bless His Word. We are saved by hearing the Word.

When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake.

Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.

Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake.

He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it? [[John 13:21-25](#)].

If you think that Jesus was unmoved because Judas was going to betray Him, you are wrong. He was troubled in spirit. The disciples were stupefied. You can imagine the shock wave that went over that room. Judas had been so clever that not a person there believed he was the traitor. Each one thought it might be the other, and each one thought it might be himself. Each disciple knew that he was capable of doing the same thing.

I doubt that the little by-play between John and Peter was noticed by the others. There must have been confusion in the room. Peter was probably farther away from Jesus, and since John was next to Him, Peter signaled to John to ask.

Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the Son of Simon [[John 13:26](#)].

It was the custom for the host at a banquet to take a piece of bread, dip it in the sauce, and present it to the guest of honor. The Lord makes Judas His guest of honor by this gesture. He is extending to him the token of friendship. Judas is at the crossroads. Christ keeps the door open to Judas up to the very last. Even in the garden Jesus will say, ". . . Friend, wherefore art thou come? . . ." ([Matt. 26:50](#)) -- still keeping the door open for Judas.

Jesus knew what Judas would do. As another has stated it, "foreknowledge is not causation." That is, although the Lord knew what Judas would do, the Lord did not force him to do it. In fact, He offered His friendship to Judas to the very last.

And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly [[John 13:27](#)].

Satan took over this man Judas gradually. I don't think that Satan ever takes a man suddenly. There are many little falls that permit Satan to move in gradually. Then finally he takes over. The Lord gave Judas an opportunity to accept Him, but Judas turned his back on the Lord. Then Satan moved in and took him over completely.

Judas makes his own decision. God never sends a man to hell unless that man first of all sends himself there. You see, God ratifies human decision; God seconds the motion. When a man says that he accepts Christ, God says, "I second it; I receive you." When a man says that he rejects Christ, as Judas did here, God says, "I second the motion."

Now Jesus asks him to leave quickly. Having made his decision, he is not beyond the control of God. In fact, having made his decision, he is compelled to cooperate with God. You see, the religious rulers didn't want to arrest Jesus and crucify Him while the crowds were there during the feast. They wanted to wait until the feast was over. But our Lord tells him to go now and do it quickly. So Judas must go out and tell the leaders that he has been found out, and they must move quickly.

Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him [[John 13:28](#)].

No one at the table even suspected that Judas was the betrayer.

For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor [[John 13:29](#)].

Notice that our Lord did not beg for support. They had a treasury, and they carried on their business in a businesslike way. It also tells us that the Lord did not feed them miraculously. They had to go and buy food. They were not some "far out" group. Judas was the treasurer. There is always a temptation in the handling of money -- which is equally true today. At the Passover season donations were given to the poor; so the disciples thought this may have been what the Lord asked him to do with the money.

He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night [[John 13:30](#)].

Notice also that when Judas went out, it was night. Friend, it was eternal night for Judas. It was the Devil's day, and the Devil's day is always like the darkness that descended on Egypt. This man walked out into eternal night.

What God does, He does slowly. What the Devil does, he does quickly. The Devil must move fast because his days are limited. God has all eternity to accomplish His purposes. Often we fail to understand that.

There is now a change in the room. Judas is gone, and our Lord begins to talk to these men. They are frightened. The shadow of the Cross is over that little group in the Upper Room. Now our Lord attempts to lift these men from the low plane to the high plane; from the here-and-now to the hereafter; from the material to the eternal; from that which is secular to that which is spiritual. Although Simon Peter interrupts Him, I think Jesus' discourse begins right here and goes on into chapter 14.

Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him.

If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him [[John 13:31-32](#)].

The Lord Jesus is now moving into the spiritual realm. The Son of Man is going to be glorified, and this will be accomplished through His death and resurrection. From the human side the Cross looks like shame and defeat, but God is glorified in Him because the salvation of the world will be wrought through the Cross.

Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you [[John 13:33](#)].

Judas is gone now so He can address them as His little children. He is going to the Cross, and no one can go to the Cross as He did. He suffered alone, and there is a suffering of Christ which you and I cannot fully comprehend.

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another [[John 13:34-35](#)].

Now He gives to them a new commandment. Some folk would seem to think that He said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if you are fundamental in the faith." Now friend, I believe in being fundamental in the faith, I believe in the inerrancy of the Word of God, in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, in the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. I believe that He died on the Cross for the expiation of sin; that He died a substitutionary, vicarious death for the sins of the world. I believe He was raised bodily and ascended back into heaven and that He is coming personally to take His church out of the world. But I want to say this, and I want to say it very carefully: believing those things does not convince the unsaved world outside. The world is dying for just a little love. Jesus says that His disciples are to be known for their love.

When I was a boy, my dad died and I went to work to support my mother and sister; so I stayed with two aunts and a bachelor uncle. One aunt was a Baptist and the other a Presbyterian. My uncle was an unbeliever and a beer drinker. Every Sunday he would get up just in time for the noon meal. For dinner every Sunday we heard all the Baptist dirt and the Presbyterian dirt. Years later, when my uncle was in the hospital, one of my aunts wept and asked me, "Vernon, why doesn't he come to Christ?" I almost told her. Friend, may I say, we do not win the lost by being Christian cannibals. "But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another" ([Gal. 5:15](#)). This is the type of thing that is turning the unsaved away from the church today. This is the reason they don't come in to hear the gospel. They hear the gossip before they can hear the gospel! Do you realize that the most important commandment for a Christian is not to witness, not to serve, but to love other believers?

Tertullian writes that the Roman government was disturbed about the early church. Christians were increasing in number by leaps and bounds. Because they wouldn't take even a pinch of incense and put it before the image of the emperor, the Romans felt they might be disloyal. Spies went into the Christian gathering and came back with a report something like this: "These Christians are very strange people. They meet together in an empty room to worship. They do not have an image. They speak of One by the name of Jesus, who is absent, but whom they seem to be expecting at any time. And my, how they love Him and how they love one another." Now if spies came from an atheistic government to see whether Christianity is genuine and they came to your church, what would be the verdict? Would they go back to report how these Christians love each other?

Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards.

Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake.

Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice [[John 13:36-38](#)].

Here is a man who is close to all of us. I believe that if you are a child of God, you would never sell out Jesus as Judas did. The Devil does not have control of you, because the Spirit of God dwells in you. But there isn't a one of us who would not do what Simon Peter did. His problem was not that Satan was in his heart but that he had confidence in his own flesh. I believe that is the problem for all of us.

Peter really loved the Lord. Peter was ready to defend the Lord. Yet the Lord must treat Peter as a juvenile. He is always blundering -- I don't believe this man reached mental and spiritual maturity until the Day of Pentecost. The only things he heard of all that Jesus had said was that Jesus was going away. He reacts like a child who says, "Where are you going, Daddy? I want to go, too." His first question is, "Lord, whither goest thou?" His second is, "Lord, why cannot I follow thee now?"

When Jesus answered him, "Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards," the only thing that Peter heard was the "now." He is like a child who asks for a cookie. When the mother says he cannot have the cookie now but must wait until after dinner, the child seizes on the "now." He wants the cookie now. He doesn't want to wait until after dinner.

Peter's love for and loyalty to Jesus was sincere. He wanted to follow the Lord wherever He was going. When he said, "I will lay down my life for thy sake," he meant every word of it. He attempted to fight for his Lord, and he cut off the servant's ear. (The reason he got his ear was because he was a fisherman and not a swordsman. He was aiming for his head.) When the Lord told Peter that he would deny Him three times before the cock would crow, it was already dark, and he just couldn't believe he would deny his Lord before the dawn.

What a lesson there is here for us. Peter was overconfident in himself. We should learn from this that we should have no confidence in the flesh. Paul says, ". . . when I am weak, then am I strong" ([2Cor. 12:10](#)). Do you recognize your weakness or do you think you are strong? Someone asked Dwight L. Moody, "Do you have grace enough to die for Jesus?" He answered, "No, He hasn't asked me to do that. But if He asks me to, I know He will give me the grace to do it." That is the answer. Our own flesh is weak, but God will supply our every need.

## Chapter 14

**THEME:** Jesus comforts His disciples

Chapter divisions in the Bible are wonderful because they help us find our way around in the Bible, but sometimes the chapter break is at an unfortunate place, as is the case here. What our Lord says at the beginning of chapter 14 is a continuation of what He was saying to Simon Peter in chapter 13.

Simon Peter has just declared that he would lay down his life for Him. Then the Lord Jesus told him that he would deny Him three times by the time the rooster crowed in the morning. We will see later that, when the rooster crowed that morning, Simon Peter had denied Him three times. Still speaking to Simon Peter, our Lord gave this chapter to bring him through that dark night of denial and to bring him back into a right relationship with God. It was given to comfort him. This chapter has cushioned the shock for multitudes of people from that day right down to the present hour.

### **Jesus Comforts His Disciples (14:1-31)**

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me [[John 14:1](#)].

People all over the world are seeking comfort at this very moment. They long for peace in their hearts. Jesus alone can bring that comfort, and here He tells the basis for it: "ye believe in God, believe also in me." In the Greek, this can also be an imperative or a command. Believe in God. Believe in Me also.

With the word believe we find the preposition eis which means "into." When John talks about saving faith, there is always a preposition with it. The faith is not inactive, not passive; it is to believe into or to believe upon or to believe in. It is an active faith, which is trust. If you believe that your car will take you home, how do you get home? By just believing it? No, you believe in it so much that you commit yourself to the car. You get into it and trust that it will get you home. In just such a way you get saved. You believe in Christ; you trust yourself to Him.

"Ye believe in God, believe also in me" is a clear-cut statement of our Lord that He is God. I know a theology professor who claims that Jesus did not claim deity. I'd like to know what He is saying here in this first verse if He is not making Himself equal with God. His statement makes something very clear right here. To believe in God means you are not an atheist, but to be a Christian, you must have personal faith and trust in Christ.



In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you [[John 14:2](#)].

Let's establish, first of all, what the Father's house is; the Father's house is this vast universe that you and I live in today. We are living on one of the very minor, smallest planets. We're just a speck in space. We live in the Father's house.

Sir James Jeans called it the expanding universe. First, men thought of the earth with the stars up there like electric light bulbs screwed in the top of the universe. Then men began to explore and found that we are in a solar system, that we are actually a minor planet going around the sun, and that there are quite a few other planets "tripping the light fantastic" around the sun with us. We, together with other solar systems, are in a galactic system, and when you look up at the Milky Way, you see the other side of our galactic system. Now friend, ours is only one galactic system. If we could move out far enough, we would find other galactic systems that make ours look like it is just a peanut in space. We are told that our nearest neighbor, Andromeda, is something like 2,000,000 light years away from us. Friend, we won't go to our nearest neighbor of the galactic system to borrow a cup of sugar in the morning, because we won't get back in time for lunch! Even these galactic systems are not the end of space at all. Beyond them, they find what they call quasars. The reason the astronomers call them quasars is because that is a German word meaning they don't know what they are. They have found them through the radio telescopes like they have on the Mojave Desert. They have an even bigger telescope over in England, and they have found that beyond these quasars are other -- well, they don't know what they are -- so the British have come up with the very fine scientific term, "blops," and so they call them blops! We simply do not know how vast this universe is. It may be an infinite universe. If there is an infinite universe, there must be an infinite God. Maybe God is letting us paint ourselves into a corner so that we will have to acknowledge that He is up there after all!

Our Lord said, "In my Father's house are many mansions." I think there was a wry smile on His face when He said that. He is the One who made them, and He knew how many there were out there. We don't know and may never know. I do not think that God has a vacancy sign hanging out anyplace in this vast universe. I don't mean that human beings are living on other planets. One is enough of little mankind -- we are the ones who are in rebellion against God. However, I think this vast universe is filled with created intelligences who are looking at this little earth. This is where they see something unique in the universe. They knew something about God's wisdom and His person and His power, but they knew nothing about His love until the second Person of the Trinity came down to this earth and died on the Cross. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son! There is a display of God's love on this earth.

You and I think we are pretty valuable. I don't want to offend anybody, friend, but do you know the human race isn't worth saving? God could very easily brush us off this little earth and start over again. He could speak the earth and us out of existence and very little would be missing. But then He wouldn't be demonstrating His love. He would be demonstrating justice and righteousness but not love. God loves us. That is the amazing thing and the most wonderful thing in the world. God loves us! He loves you and me, not because we are worth loving, but He loves us in spite of the fact that we are absolutely,



totally depraved. We belong to that kind of human race. If you deny that, look around you. Unless there is something radically wrong with the human family, how could a civilization that reached such heights tumble as far as we have gone in two or three decades?

"In my Father's house are many mansions." For many years I was an ordained Presbyterian preacher, and I lived in what that church calls a "manse," which is a shortened form of mansion. I lived in my first manse before I was married. It was a big place with fourteen rooms, and on a clear day you could see the ceiling in the living room. It was cold, and I lived in one corner of a room near the fire. When anybody talks to me about a mansion in the sky, I shudder. The Greek word is *mone* meaning "abiding places." Jesus is saying that this vast universe is filled with abiding places or places to live.

"If it were not so, I would have told you." The Lord Jesus puts His entire reputation on the line here, and you either believe Him or you don't believe Him, my friend. "I go to prepare a place for you." This is quite wonderful. This vast universe is filled with so many places; yet He has gone to prepare a place for those who are His own. I said I think the universe is filled with intelligent creatures. John got a look at some of them in the Book of Revelation, and he was overwhelmed. He said there are a thousand times ten thousand; then he saw more and added thousands of thousands. We are dealing with a tremendous and wonderful God. One can look upon the millions in this world today and wonder whether we will get lost in the shuffle somewhere. But Jesus is up there preparing a place for all of us who belong to Him. No one can occupy it but us.

Years ago a neighbor of mine was one of the men working on the mirror for the 200-inch telescope at Palomar. In grinding the mirror, they missed it the first time by, I think, a millionth of an inch. When they finally got it finished, I kept asking him what they were seeing. Finally, he got tired of my constant questioning and wanted to know why I was so interested. "Well," I said, "you've got that big eye poked in the front window of my Father's house, and I'd like to know what you're seeing, because Jesus is preparing a place for me up there."

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also [[John 14:3](#)].

This is the first time in the Bible where you find a mention of God taking anyone off this earth to go out yonder to a place that He has prepared. This was not the hope of the Old Testament saint. God never promised Abraham to take him off yonder to a star. God told him He would make his offspring as numerous as the stars, but the promise to Abraham was to give him an eternal home on this earth. The hope of the Old Testament was for a kingdom down here on this earth in which would dwell peace and righteousness. This is the fulfillment of God's purpose for this earth. Personally, I think the expression "the Kingdom of Heaven" means the reign of God over this earth. God has said, "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion" ([Ps. 2:6](#)). That is God's earthly purpose, and He is moving undeviatingly, unhesitatingly, and uncompromisingly toward the day when He puts His own Son upon the throne here on earth. That will be the Kingdom of Heaven. That is God's earthly purpose; it is the hope of the Old Testament.

The disciples are startled when Jesus reveals that He is going to take a people -- beginning with the apostles -- off this earth to be with Christ in the place that He is preparing for them. This is the first time it is mentioned, but it is not the last time. Paul talked about it, saying in [1Thessalonians 4](#) that the Lord Himself would descend from heaven with a shout. His voice will be like a trumpet and like the sound of an archangel. He is coming to call His own. The dead in Christ will rise first, and then those believers who are still alive will be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air. So shall we ever be with the Lord in that place that He has prepared. John, in [Revelation 21](#), tells us that the city, the new Jerusalem, will come down from God out of heaven. It will be a new city, a new concept in urban dwelling, my friend, and that is where believers, from the apostles on, will dwell throughout eternity.

And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know [[John 14:4](#)].

He is lifting these men into the heights, because, you see, there in the Upper Room the shadow of the Cross had fallen athwart that company, and sin was knocking at the door of that room demanding its pound of flesh. Our Lord is attempting to lift them from the here-and-now to the hereafter, from the material to the spiritual, from the earthly to the heavenly. Jesus tells them two things: the destination, which is the "where," and the way to go, which is the "how."

Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? [[John 14:5](#)].

There is an apostle sitting there whom we call doubting Thomas. He seems always to be asking a question or raising a doubt. He had a question mark for a brain, and it took our Lord a long time to make an exclamation mark out of it! I am really glad that he was there and that he asked the question, because it is a good question. I would have wanted to ask it if I had been there. If he hadn't asked the question, we would never have had our Lord's wonderful answer, which is the gospel in a nutshell.

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me [[John 14:6](#)].

The article in the Greek is an adjective. Jesus said, "I am the way." He is not just a person who shows the way, but He, personally, is the way. No church or ceremony can bring you to God. Only Christ can bring you to God. He is the way. Either you have Christ or you don't have Him; either you trust Him or you don't. Also Jesus said that He is the truth. He isn't saying that He tells the truth, although He does do that. He is the truth! He is the bureau of standards for truth, the very touchstone of truth. And He is the life. He isn't simply stating that He is alive. He is the source, the origin of life from the lowest vegetable plane of life to the highest spiritual plane of life.

"No man cometh unto the Father, but by me." He made a dead-end street of all the cults and "isms." He says the only way to God is through Him. That is a dogmatic statement! Years ago a student out at UCLA told me he didn't like the Bible because it is filled with dogmatism. I agreed with him that it is. He especially selected this verse and said, "That's dogmatic." I said, "It sure is, but have you realized that it is characteristic of truth to be dogmatic? Truth has to be dogmatic."

I had a teacher who was the most dogmatic, narrow-minded person I've ever met. She insisted that  $2 + 2 = 4$ . It didn't make any difference what you had two of -- apples or cows or dollars -- she always insisted that  $2 + 2 = 4$ . She was dogmatic. I have found that the bank I do business with operates on the same principle. Only in my case it is  $2 + 2 = 0$ , and they are dogmatic about it. Friend, let me say to you that one of the characteristics of truth is its dogmatism.

Now, not all dogmatism is truth -- there is a lot of ignorance that is dogmatic. However, that which is truth has to be dogmatic. When I ask directions to go somewhere, I do not want my directions from a man who isn't sure and doesn't know exactly how to get there. I want my directions from one who knows exactly where I'm to turn and how many blocks I'm to go. As I said to this young student, "Millions of people for over nineteen hundred years have been coming to Christ on the basis of His statement, 'I am the way,' and they have found it is accurate, that it has brought them to heaven. Why don't you try it? The Lord Jesus says you are not going to get to heaven except through Him. Why not come through Him and make sure?"

Someday I hope I can thank the apostle Thomas for asking our Lord this question in the Upper Room: "How can we know the way?" Without it we would not have this marvelous answer in [John 14:6](#).

Now there is another interruption. Philip has a question.

If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.

Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us [[John 14:7-8](#)].

Philip was a very quiet individual, the opposite from loquacious Peter. I think he spoke very seldom. He has a Greek name and some Bible students believe that he was a Greek. However, he could have been Jewish and still have a Greek name. He is a very unusual man because every time we meet him he is bringing someone to Jesus. Remember that he brought Nathanael. I've often wondered about that. Philip was the quiet man and Nathanael was the wisecracker. Philip was the straight man and Nathanael was the humorist. But quiet Philip brings people to Jesus. Remember that the Greeks came to him, wanting to see Jesus. Here he expresses the highest ambition any man can have, the highest desire expressed by any person in the whole Bible, "shew us the Father."

I'd like to ask you a personal question today. What is your desire in life? What is your ultimate goal? Do you want to get rich? Do you want to make a name for yourself? Do you want to educate your children? Do you want to bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord? Our goals may be worthy goals; yet the highest goal is this expressed by Philip, "Lord, shew us the Father."

Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? [[John 14:9](#)].

Philip knew from the Old Testament that Moses had seen the glory of God and that Isaiah had a vision of the glory of God. I don't think that we should interpret Jesus' answer as a rebuke. He tells Philip that He has performed many miracles. Although Philip had not seen the glory of God as Moses or Isaiah did, he had seen Jesus and had witnessed His words and His works. Everything that Philip wished to see, he had seen in Jesus Christ. He had seen God. In Christ there is a much greater revelation of God than anything in the Old Testament. Philip had the greatest revelation of God because he had seen Him incarnate in flesh and been with Him -- in His presence -- for three years! Remember that the writer to the Hebrews says that Jesus is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person (see [Heb. 1:3](#)). "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" does not mean you are seeing the identical Person, but you are seeing the same Person in power, in character, in love, and in everything else. You have seen all you would see in God the Father because "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" ([John 4:24](#)). "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" ([John 1:18](#)). It is Jesus Christ whom we see. We are going to spend all eternity with Him. For those of us who love Him, the goal of our lives is to come to know Him.

Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?  
the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the  
Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works [[John 14:10](#)].

Jesus here points to the testimony of His words and of His works. They are the same. One equals the other. He was perfectly consistent. You see, our problem is to get our words and our works synchronized. We make tremendous statements and give glorious testimonies, but none of us lives a perfect life. This is the reason every Christian should have a time of confession. As we saw in chapter 13, Jesus says that He must wash us so that we may have fellowship with Him. Too many Christians lose their fellowship with God because they think they are all right, but their words and their works are not consistent. This needs to be confessed.

Have you ever noticed that the Lord Jesus never appealed to His own mind and His own will to make a decision? "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." When He spoke, it was the will of the Father. All His works were the will of the Father. So He tells Philip that when he heard the words of Jesus, he was hearing the words of the Father and, when he saw the works of Jesus, he was seeing the Father working through Jesus.

You will notice that Jesus has interruptions during His discourse. First it was Peter, then Thomas, and now Philip. But Jesus continues on in His discourse until [verse 22](#) when He is again interrupted.

Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else  
believe me for the very works' sake [[John 14:11](#)].

Jesus says that if you can't believe Him because of His words, then believe Him because of His works. They should convince you.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father [[John 14:12](#)].

To understand this verse, I should call attention to the fact that the second word works is in italics which means that it is not in the better manuscripts but is put in by the translators to fill out the thought. To be accurate, it should read: "the works that I do shall he do also; and greater than these shall he do." When our Lord was down here on this earth, He performed tremendous works and miracles. These apostles to whom He spoke did the same things. They healed the sick and raised the dead. Yet Jesus says that those who believe on Him will do greater. What is the greater thing which they shall do?

Simon Peter, who had denied Him on the night He was arrested, preached a sermon on the Day of Pentecost and 3000 people became believers! I think of the men over the years who have invested their lives in winning men to Christ. I think of missionaries, such as George L. Mackey who went to Uganda. What a missionary he was! Preaching a crucified, risen, glorified, returning Savior so that a hearer may accept Christ and be born again is a greater miracle than healing the sick. Am I right? Which is better: to heal the soul or to heal the body? When Jesus Christ was on earth, He performed the miracle of raising the physical bodies of men, but we have the privilege of preaching Jesus Christ so that men, body and soul, may live eternally. The supreme accomplishment is to bring men and women into a right relationship with God.

How are these greater works done? "Because I go unto my Father." You see, it is Christ who is still working, but today He is working through human instrumentality. He works through frail human clay, human flesh. I am amazed that I can give a Bible message over the radio and there are people who turn to Christ. Friend, that is greater. If Jesus Christ were here speaking to people, it would be a great work. When Jesus Christ takes you and me and works through us to reach people, that is greater.

Have you noticed how often Jesus speaks of His Father? The Father is mentioned twenty times in this passage, and it is always the Lord Jesus who mentions Him.

And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it [[John 14:13-14](#)].

He continues right on to say that these greater things are the result of prayer. Prayer evangelism is so neglected today. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do."

These verses have been so misunderstood. A great many people have picked this up like a dog picks up a bone and runs with it. They say they prayed and God just didn't answer their prayer. I've had Christian people tell me that they took that verse at face value. They prayed and God didn't answer their prayer. They ask me what is wrong. I tell them that they are reading something into the verse that is not there at all. They need to keep on reading. This is all tied into one package.

If ye love me, keep my commandments [[John 14:15](#)].

Now let us consider what all three of these verses say. What does it mean to ask in the name of Christ? To pray in His Person means to be standing in His place. It means to be fully identified with Him, joined to Christ. It means that you and I are pleading the merits of His blessed Son when we stand before God. We have no standing of our own before God at all. He does not hear my prayer because I am Vernon McGee, and He does not hear your prayer because you are who you are. He hears our prayers when they are in the name of Christ. This is not just a little phrase that we tag on to the end of our prayer closing with "in Jesus' name." Praying in His name is presenting it in His merit and for His glory.

"That will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." A prayer that will enable God to be glorified in the Son is the prayer that He will answer. So, when we pray in the name of Jesus and for the glory of God, we are not praying for something selfishly for ourselves. We are praying for Him. We are praying that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

Also it depends on our obedience to Christ. This promise is given to those who love Him, and the evidence of their love is the keeping of His commandments. Love will be demonstrated by obedience to Christ. An undisciplined Christian cannot say that he loves the Lord Jesus. How are you doing in that area, friend? Do you love Him? Are you keeping His commandments because you love Him today?

Dr. Harry Ironside was sitting on a platform with a young pastor during a meeting one night. A young lady entered the meeting and the pastor told him that she formerly had been an active leader among his members, then had begun to run with the world, and that this was the first time he had seen her in church in months. Dr. Ironside preached on this passage of Scripture that night. She was greatly incensed and came to see him after the meeting. "How dare you tell these people that if you ask anything in the name of Jesus, He will do it?" she asked him. Dr. Ironside answered, "Why don't you sit down and tell me about it?" She told him that her father had been desperately ill some months before, and while the doctor was up in his room, she had knelt in the living room, claimed that promise, and prayed in Jesus' name for his recovery. When the doctor came down from the room, he told her that her father was dead. "Now," she said, "don't tell me that God keeps His promises!" Dr. Ironside said, "Did you read the next verse, 'If ye love me, keep my commandments'?" Then Dr. Ironside asked her what would happen if she found a check made out to someone else and tried to cash it by signing that name. She said "I would be a forger." So he referred her to this verse, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Then he asked her, "Have you been doing that?" Instead of replying, she turned red. Then he explained that what she was trying to do was the same thing as trying to cash a check made out to somebody else. We all need to recognize, friend, that obedience to Him is the evidence of our love for Him, and this promise is given to those who love Him.

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you [[John 14:16-17](#)].



This is a unique fact of this age in which we are living. The Holy Spirit was here on earth before Pentecost, but on the Day of Pentecost He came to indwell believers. That was the thing which was new.

"Holy" and "Spirit" describe Him, but Comforter is His name, if He has a name. It is a very fitting name, as com means "along side of" and fortis means "strong." He is the strong One who abides with us forever.

He does not say that the world would not receive the Spirit of truth. He says the world cannot receive Him. Oh, if we could learn this! The Spirit of God can take the Word of God and open it to the believer, but the unsaved man must first believe in Jesus Christ as his Savior. The man of the world cannot see Him because He is seen and worshiped in spirit and truth. He is seen with the spiritual eye. It is only by the Spirit of God that these eyes and ears can be opened to understand the Word of God. The Holy Spirit is the teacher to lead and guide us into truth. Without Him, the Bible becomes a book of history, a book of facts. The Holy Spirit teaches the truths of the Bible. The Holy Spirit has been in the world, but Jesus says that now He "shall be in you."

I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you [[John 14:18](#)].

The Greek word for comfortless is orphanos which means "orphans." Jesus says that He will not leave us orphans but will come to us in the person of the Holy Spirit.

Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me:  
because I live, ye shall live also.

At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me,  
and I in you [[John 14:19-20](#)].

What is "that day?" It is the day you and I are living in. It is the day that began with Pentecost.

"Ye in me, and I in you" is the most profound statement in the Gospel of John or in the whole Bible. They are all monosyllabic words so that a little child can understand them; yet no philosopher can plumb the depths of their meaning. "You in Me" -- that is salvation. To be saved means to be in Christ. That is why Peter says that we are saved by baptism. Baptism means identification, and it means to be identified with Christ. God sees everyone as either in Christ or out of Christ. You are either in Him by faith or you are out of Him with your sins still upon you. If you are in Christ, then God sees you in Christ, and His righteousness is your righteousness. You stand complete in Him. "I in you" -- is sanctification. That is Christian living down here. Is Christ living in you? Paul says, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" ([Gal. 2:20](#)).

He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that  
loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and  
I will love him, and will manifest myself to him [[John 14:21](#)].

Don't say that you love Christ if you are not obeying Him. He is making this very clear here. Jesus is going to manifest Himself to the one who loves Him. Don't think this will



be a manifestation by a vision. Later He says that it is the Holy Spirit who will take the things of Jesus and show them to you. Where does He do this? In the Scriptures. That is where Jesus is manifested.

Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? [[John 14:22](#)].

Judas is saying, "Lord, this is wonderful to be here and hear you say these things, but have you forgotten the world?" Here is the first missionary, by the way. The Lord Jesus answers him and His answer is the rest of the chapter.

Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me [[John 14:23-24](#)].

The way the world is going to find out about the Lord Jesus is through us, and obedience is imperative. Profession is not worth anything. Church membership is not really worth anything. The issue is our love for Him evidenced by our obedience. How about your love for Him? Does it discipline you? Is He real to you? These are the things that are important.

These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you.

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you [[John 14:25-26](#)].

Jesus hasn't forgotten the world. In fact, He is thinking of the world. He has called these apostles into the Upper Room and has given them the truth so that they might take it to the world in the power of the Holy Spirit. The only way the truth can be given to the world is through these men. John was one of those men, and he has written this Gospel of John for us in the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus assures them that the Holy Spirit will teach them all things and bring all things to their remembrance. It is evident that He did just that.

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid [[John 14:27](#)].

This verse takes us back to the beginning of this chapter. It is His final word of comfort. The peace He is talking about here is not the peace of sins forgiven. This is the glorious, wonderful peace that comes to the heart of those who are fully yielded to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the peace of heart and mind of those who are in the will of God.

Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.

And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe.

Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.

But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence [[John 14:28-31](#)].

He tells them they should rejoice that He is going away because of the wonderful blessings that will come to them. Jesus Christ was going back to the Father and then He would send the Comforter to them.

He tells them He cannot walk and talk very much more with them, and He didn't -- in a few hours He would be arrested and His disciples scattered. The prince of this world was coming. Jesus Christ would have another siege with Satan, which I believe took place in the Garden of Gethsemane. After that, He would go to the Cross for the sins of the world. After His ascension, the Comforter would come to indwell believers.

## Chapter 15

**THEME:** Jesus is genuine Vine; disciples are branches

This fifteenth chapter is a part of the Upper Room Discourse, although our Lord probably did not speak it in the Upper Room. At least the assumption is that He did not, because the last statement in chapter 14 is, "Arise, let us go hence." Somewhere between the Upper Room and the Garden of Gethsemane our Lord spoke the words found in chapters 15 and 16, then prayed the prayer, recorded in chapter 17, as He entered the garden.

It has been the belief of many expositors that our Lord gave this chapter in a discourse down in the Valley of Kidron or on the side of the Mount of Olives, because we know that at that time there was a vineyard in that area which covered that valley. We also know that it was full moon because it was the time of the Passover. He may well have spoken these words as they walked through the vineyard. It would have been an appropriate place.

Another suggestion has been made by several English expositors -- and it is the one I accept -- that that night He went by the temple, following the Law as He so meticulously did. The gates would have been open during the Passover nights. Those beautiful gates of the temple were actually a tourist attraction. They had been forged in Greece, floated across the Hellespont, then brought to Jerusalem, and placed in Herod's temple there. The gates were made of bronze and wrought into them was a golden vine. That the vine symbolizes the nation Israel is apparent from the following verses: "Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it. Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land" ([Ps. 80:8-9](#)). "Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill. . . . For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry" ([Isa. 5:1, 7](#)). "Yet I

had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me? ([Jer. 2:21](#)). "Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself . . ." ([Hos. 10:1](#)). It is clear that the vine is a picture of the nation Israel.

Now, friend, our Lord is saying one of the most revolutionary things these men have ever heard. It sounds familiar to us today, but it was strange to their ears. Listen to Him.

### **Jesus Is Genuine Vine; Disciples Are Branches (15:1-27)**

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman [[John 15:1](#)].

The word for true here is *alethinos*, which means "genuine." A thing can be true as over against error and falsehood, or a thing can be true over against that which is a counterfeit. The latter is the way it is used here. We have had this word used in the same way previously in the Gospel of John. John the Baptist was a reflecting light, but Jesus Christ is the true Light. Moses gave bread in the wilderness, but Jesus Christ is the true Bread. So here Jesus is saying, "I am the true vine, the genuine vine."

These disciples had Jewish concepts and their thought patterns had been governed by the Old Testament. He is telling them now that the nation Israel is not the genuine vine. Their identification with the Jewish nation and the Jewish religion is not the essential thing. "I am the genuine vine." The important thing now is for the disciples to be related to Jesus Christ. That was revolutionary!

Our Lord used a marvelous figure of speech, and He made it very clear that it is not your identification with a religion or a ceremony or an organization that is essential. We are to be identified with Christ! We are in Christ by the baptism of the Holy Spirit the moment we trust Christ as our Savior and are born again as a child of God.

"My Father is the husbandman." This, too, is a startling word. In the Old Testament passages and in the parables, God is the owner of the vineyard. Here He is the keeper, the farmer, the One who takes care of the vineyard. Jesus is the genuine Vine, and the Father takes care of Him.

In the Old Testament it is prophesied that the Lord Jesus would grow up before Him as a tender plant and as a root out of the dry ground. Think how often the Father intervened to save Jesus from the Devil who wished to slay Him. The Father is the One who cared for the Vine, and He will care for the branches, too.

The branches must be joined to the Vine. For what purpose? For fruit-bearing. There are three words or phrases which are very important, and we will pick them up as we go along.

Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit [[John 15:2](#)].

"In me," that is, in Christ, is what it means to be saved. There are tremendous words like propitiation, reconciliation, and redemption that cover particular phases of salvation, but the entire spectrum of salvation is in the phrase "in Christ." There are only two groups of

people: those who are in Christ and those who are not in Christ. How do you get "in Christ"? By the new birth. When you trust Christ as Savior, you become a child of God through faith. You are born again by the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit does something else: He not only indwells you, but He also baptizes you. That is what puts every believer into the body of Christ -- "every branch in me."

This passage is directed to believers, to those who are already in Christ. Jesus is not talking about how a person gets saved. He is not actually talking about salvation at all in this passage. Rather, He is talking about fruit-bearing, and that is the next word we wish to mark. Fruit is mentioned six times in the first ten verses. We will find as we go further that there are three degrees of fruit-bearing: fruit, more fruit, and much fruit. The whole theme here is fruit-bearing.

"Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away." Where does He take it? He takes it away from the place of fruit-bearing.

Listen how He describes this in [verse 6](#). (We will come to [verses 3-5](#) later.)

If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned [[John 15:6](#)].

"Oh-oh," somebody says, "that sounds as if you lose your salvation." No, remember this passage is not talking about salvation but about fruit-bearing. It is talking about that which is the result of being saved.

First of all, what is the fruit? I do not believe that the fruit mentioned here refers to soul-winning, as so many people seem to think. I believe soul-winning is a by-product but not the fruit itself. The fruit is the fruit of the Spirit. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. . ." ([Gal. 5:22-23](#)). This is fruit in the life of the believer. Abiding in Christ will produce effectual prayer, perpetual fruit, and celestial joy:

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you [[John 15:7](#)].

That is prayer effectual.

Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples [[John 15:8](#)].

This is fruit perpetual.

These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full [[John 15:11](#)].

That is joy celestial.

If a person has such fruit in his life, he will be bringing men into the presence of God by his very life. That, of course, makes soul-winning a by-product.

"Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away." He wants fruit in our lives. If a branch does not bear fruit, how does He take it away? One of the ways He removes it is

by taking such a person away from the place of fruit-bearing. I know many who have been set aside today because they were no longer effective for God. There are ministers like that and there are lay people like that. Removing such a branch does not mean they lose their salvation, but they are taken away from the place of fruit-bearing.

Sometimes this removing from the place of fruit-bearing is by death, physical death. I believe this is what John means in [1John 5:16](#) when he says that there is a sin unto death. A Christian can go on sinning until God will remove him from the place of fruit-bearing by death. Ananias and Sapphira were removed by death from the early church, which was a holy church, a fruit-bearing church. These two liars could not stay in that church. I'm afraid they would be very comfortable in some of our churches today, but God would not permit them to remain in the early church.

"Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." The Greek word is kathairo, which means "to cleanse." Some people consider the purging to be pruning, and He does that too, but it really means to cleanse.

There is no doubt that the Lord does some pruning. He moves into our lives and takes out those things that offend, and sometimes it hurts. He removes things that are hindering us. I can speak to that subject and confess that it hurts. I think the Lord was pruning me when He permitted me to have a cancer and allowed it to stay in my body. He prunes out that which hinders our bearing fruit.

One of the reasons so many of God's children get hurt by this method of pruning is that they get so far from God, so far out of fellowship. The closer we are to God, the less it will hurt. I can remember playing hookey from school when I was a boy. We left our books at school and took off for the creek and went fishing. Although we didn't catch any fish, we had a lot of fun. We came in about the time school was out to get our books before going home so our parents wouldn't suspect that we had played hookey. The principal of the school figured we would do this, and when we walked into the room, he walked in right after us and said, "Boys, I'm glad to see you." We had to go to his office and wait while he got his switches. (We'd been through this before.) One of the fellows with me had been through this many times, and he gave me some of the best advice I've ever had. He said that when the principal started switching, we should move a step closer each time instead of backing off. The closer we were to him the less it would hurt. So the first time he hit me, instead of stepping back, I moved right in close to him, and I got so close I was where his fist was, and he wasn't hurting me at all. I have learned that is really good advice when the Lord chastens us also. Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth. His chastening is not a sign that He is against us; He is trying to get fruit out of our lives. We tend to complain and move away from Him, but if we draw close to Him, it won't hurt nearly so much.

However, the "purging" in this verse literally means cleansing. When I was in the Bethlehem area, I saw that in their vineyards they let the grapevines grow on the ground, and they propped them up with a rock. Because the grapes get dirty and pests get on them, they actually go around and wash the grapes before they get ripe. So the Lord comes to our lives; He lifts us up and washes us so that we may bear more fruit. How does He do this?

Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you  
[[John 15:3](#)].

"Ye are clean through the word." The purging is accomplished by the Word of God. The cleansing power of the Word of God is a wonderful thing. We hear so much today about modern wash-day miracles, but I've never found them to be as miraculous as the claims made for them. The only true wash-day miracle is the cleansing power of the Word of God. "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" ([1Pet. 1:22-23](#)). We were born again by the Word of God, washed from our sins. Then in our walk down here we get dirty and need the Word of God to cleanse us continually. That is one reason to study the Bible -- to be cleansed. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word" ([Ps. 119:9](#)).

There are light views among believers today that you can live any kind of life so long as you are fundamental in your belief of salvation by the grace of God. Believe me, God uses the Word of God to reveal to us when we are not walking according to His will. The real test which reveals whether a person is genuine in his relationship to God is whether he is studying the Word of God and whether he is letting it have its way in his life! God intends for us to be obedient to His Word.

"Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word" ([Ps. 119:67](#)). "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes" ([Ps. 119:71](#)). My friend, He uses affliction to bring us to the Word of God that you and I might be made serviceable to Him. I don't think that you will ever be clean before God if you don't study the Word of God. I believe that the people who are really dangerous are the ones who are as active as termites in our churches but who are reluctant to study the Word of God. I consider them the most dangerous element against the Word of God and the cause of Christ in this world. My friend, we need to study the Word of God and apply it to our lives.

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself,  
except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me  
[[John 15:4](#)].

We have come to the third word I want you to mark, which is abide. To abide in Christ means constant communion with Him all the time. We have just talked of the cleansing power of the Word of God. That is a part of abiding. We must be cleansed daily. There is a story about Spurgeon who stopped in the middle of the street, removed his hat, and prayed. One of his deacons saw this and asked him about it. Mr. Spurgeon said that a cloud had come between him and his Lord and he wanted to remove it immediately; he had stopped to confess his sinful thought. We need to confess our sins to the Lord to abide in Him, to stay in constant communion with Him.

Also to abide in Him, we are to keep His commandments.

If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I  
have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.



Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you [[John 15:10,14](#)].

In our hymn books are songs like "Jesus Is a Friend of Mine" and "There's not a Friend like the Lowly Jesus." Friend, let me say this kindly. There is no lowly Jesus today but a glorified Christ at God's right hand. Calling Jesus a friend of mine is sentimental and really wrong. If I would say that the President of the United States is my friend, I bring him down to my level. If he says that I am his friend, that is wonderful. Listen to what Jesus says. "Ye are my friend, if ye do whatsoever I command you." We don't need all this sentimental trash today. We need some honest heart-searching. Are we doing what Jesus has commanded us to do? Obedience is essential to abiding.

As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love [[John 15:9](#)].

Abiding is a continuing communion. That is the relationship of branch and vine. I have a 72\$FT x 123\$FT ranch here in California on which grow four avocado trees, three orange trees, and one tangerine tree. I have never had to say to the branches that they should abide in the tree or we wouldn't have any fruit. I've never been up in the night to inspect them or come home unexpectedly and found the branches running around away from the tree. They abide and they bear fruit. You think I am being ridiculous. However, many Christians think they can live like the Devil all week and on Saturday night, then come in and serve the Lord on Sunday. I happen to know because I tried that for years. My friend, we must be in constant communion with Him to bear fruit. That means when you wake in the morning, when you are at your desk in the office, when you are driving your car on the streets, you are abiding in constant communion.

I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing [[John 15:5](#)].

Because we have free will, we can break fellowship with God by allowing sin in our life, by stepping out of the will of God, or by worldliness. He wants us to abide so that we bring forth much fruit. You will notice here that there is a similarity to the parable of the sower. Remember that some of the seed fell on good ground and brought forth thirtyfold - that is fruit. Some of the seed brought forth sixty -- that is more fruit. Some of the seed brought forth an hundredfold -- that is much fruit. God wants us to bear much fruit.

If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned [[John 15:6](#)].

Let me say again that this is talking about our fruit-bearing, the product of our salvation. It is not talking about how we are to be saved. Paul uses another illustration for this same thing: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." (This is talking about the works of the believers, the fruit in the life of a believer. Fire will purify gold and silver and precious stones and draw off the dross. Wood, hay, and stubble will go up



in smoke. That is the same as our verse which says the works will be cast into the fire and burned.) "If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward" ([1Cor. 3:11-14](#)). I believe that rewards will be given only for the fruit in our lives -- and we don't produce the fruit; He produces the fruit when we abide in Him.

A branch that is not abiding in Christ "is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." This is amplified by [1Corinthians 3:15](#): "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." He may get to heaven smelling as if he had been bought at a fire sale, but he will not lose his salvation.

One of the saddest things is that today the average Christian believes that normal Christian living is failure. They think that bearing much fruit is entirely out of the question and are willing to live on a low plane hoping to produce just a little fruit. Remember that the Lord wants us to produce much fruit.

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples [[John 15:7-8](#)].

This is a marvelous prayer promise, but notice the condition. "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you" means to be obedient to Him. Then we will have effectual prayer. The whole purpose of the abiding and of the praying is that the Father may have glory. This eliminates prayer for selfish reasons. The issue is fruit-bearing. God is glorified when we do bear fruit.

As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full [[John 15:9-11](#)].

The Lord wants us to have a good time. One of the fruits of the Spirit is to have joy in your life. I am mortally afraid of super-pious Christians who have no humor in their lives, yet walk around with a Bible under their arms. A fruit-bearing Christian will have a lot of fun in this life. There will be fun in going to a Bible study; there will be fun in serving the Lord. A life in fellowship with Christ is a joyous life.

This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you [[John 15:12](#)].

Remember He is talking to believers in this discourse. We are to love each other as He has loved us! It is sad to see Christians in our churches who tear down each other and gossip about one another. The Spirit of God is not working in such a situation. One can have Bible teaching and still reject this commandment of our Lord. To love as He has loved us is putting it on a very high plane. Only the Spirit of God can produce such love in our lives.

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends [[John 15:13](#)].

There is the test.

Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you [[John 15:14](#)].

The Christian life is not a hit-and-miss proposition. The Christian life is following His instructions, and the instructions are clear. If you follow these instructions, you will bear fruit. He laid down His life for us; He asks us to obey Him. He is our friend because He died for us. We are His friends when we keep His commandments.

He doesn't ask all of us to die for Him. Someone once asked Dwight L. Moody whether he had "dying grace." Mr. Moody replied that he didn't have it, but when He needed it, the Lord would give it to him. And He did.

Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you [[John 15:15-16](#)].

We are the friends of Jesus if we do whatsoever He has commanded us. Now He tells us that He has opened up His heart to us. God wants to reveal Himself to us. Remember how He searched out Abraham to reveal His plan to him because Abraham was His friend. Now Jesus tells us that He has revealed the things of God to us. That is what a friend does. How many people can you go to and open up your heart? One of the things that should characterize a believer is that you could go to him and tell him your problems and get understanding and help and encouragement from him. This is how we are to love one another.

Now, notice, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." A great many people do not like the doctrine of election, but it is wonderful and practical. Many a discouraged Christian has cast himself on the Lord saying, "Lord, you called me and chose me and I'm your child." Dr. G. Campbell Morgan said, "He chose me; therefore I am His responsibility." That is trust!

This little crowd of disciples is going to scatter in a few hours. The Shepherd will be crucified, and the sheep will scatter. At such an hour Jesus tells them, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you."

A preacher, who had been converted late in life, had been guilty of stealing before he was saved. After he had just started preaching about His Savior and was still a new Christian, he passed a hen house on his way home from church one night. It was a great temptation for him, but he stopped and prayed, "Lord, your property is in danger, and I don't mean the chickens." It is wonderful to call upon the Lord like that.

His great purpose is that we should produce fruit, not just passing fruit, but fruit that will remain. It must all be in His will. If we abide in Him, then we can ask in His name. Answers to our prayers are a pretty good barometer of our spirituality.

He climaxes this section on fruit-bearing by mentioning again that we should love one another.

These things I command you, that ye love one another [[John 15:17](#)].

This should be the relationship of believers. There is also a relationship with the world, and now He goes into that subject.

If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.

If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you [[John 15:18-19](#)].

Notice what will happen if you are a child of God. The world will hate you. I believe that a Christian's popularity can be an indication of how he is representing Christ to the world. I do not believe a Christian can be popular in the world. No Christian has any right to be more popular than Jesus was. Beware of a compromising position in order to be popular. The world will not love a real child of God. The world will love you if you are of the world. You don't have to act oddly or be superpious. The world will hate you if you are a child of God. This is difficult, especially for young people who want so much to be popular. Let's tell our young people what the Lord says. They are not going to be popular with the world if they are the children of God.

Unfortunately, there are folk in the church today who are not honestly born-again, and they will also hate you if you are a child of God. They will hate the preacher if he is true to the Word of God. May I say again, beware of the Christian who is popular with the world.

Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.

If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin [[John 15:20-22](#)].

Don't try to be greater than your Lord. The servant should not be more popular than the Master. Just keep giving out the Word. Those who persecute have two problems: they do not know the Father, and they do not want their sins revealed. Jesus Christ turned the light of heaven upon the souls of men. Whenever one turns on a light, things begin to happen. The rats and snakes and bugs and lizards hate the light and they all run for cover. They will hate the one who turns on the light, too, by the way. Jesus says, "They hated

me without a cause." There is no cause for hate in Jesus. The cause is in the sinful hearts of men.

He that hateth me hateth my Father also [[John 15:23](#)].

This is an important verse. The world does not hate their idea of God, as some vague Someone out yonder. It is Christ they hate. Jesus says when a man hates Him, he is hating God the Father also. You can say you believe in God and be popular. The real test is your relationship and attitude toward Jesus Christ. You cannot be popular and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, because He is the One who is hated.

If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.

But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause [[John 15:24-25](#)].

Some wag has said, "God created man in His image and now man is creating God in his image." That is the kind of God they want today and the kind of God they think is running the universe. Jesus quotes this as a fulfillment of [Psalm 35:19](#) and [Psalm 69:4](#) when He says they hated Him without a cause. They hate Jesus Christ because they have created a false god who is not the God of the Bible.

But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning [[John 15:26-27](#)].

The Holy Spirit bears testimony concerning Christ. If the Lord Jesus Christ is real to you, that is the work of the Holy Spirit. One way to tell whether the Spirit of God is working is whether Christ is being glorified. If the Lord Jesus is not as real to you as you wish He were, ask the Spirit of God to do a work in your heart. We need the reality of Christ in our hearts and lives.

Jesus told these men that they would bear witness to Him, and they certainly did that. It is the witness of John concerning the Lord Jesus Christ that we are studying right now. No one but the apostles could bear such a witness because they had been with Jesus from the beginning.

## Chapter 16

**THEME:** Jesus will send Holy Spirit during His absence

This chapter concludes the Upper Room Discourse. We learned in the preceding chapter that His own should love one another. This is a real rebuke to us. It is a rebuke that He must command us to do that. It is a rebuke because it shows that we are not nearly as attractive as we think we are. We need help supernaturally to enable us to love one

another. Then He told us that we are to identify with Him which will cause the world to hate us.

Also He told His disciples that if He had not come, they would not have known sin. He did not mean that they did not have their own sins but, that since He had come, their personal sins were as nothing compared to the immeasurable guilt of rejecting the Savior of the world and the Lord of glory.

There are not only degrees of rewards in heaven, but there are degrees of punishment in hell. The person today who hears about Jesus Christ and turns his back on Him is in the same category as Judas Iscariot who in the presence of Christ turned his back upon Him. To reject Him is the greatest sin of all. Jesus warns them about this in the coming chapter.

### **Jesus Will Send Holy Spirit During His Absence (16:1-33)**

The chapter begins with Jesus still talking about the hatred of the world.

These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended [[John 16:1](#)].

What things? The things mentioned in chapter 15.

They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.

And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me [[John 16:2-3](#)].

The Lord didn't want the apostles to be offended, that is, scandalized at what would happen to them. It is characteristic of founders of organizations, and especially of religions, to attempt to present a glorious future for their organizations. The method of the world is to build up the wonderful benefits and to play down the hardships and disadvantages and privations and sacrifices. How different our Lord is!

While it is true that in chapter 14 our Lord told us that He is going to prepare a place for us and that He will receive us unto Himself, He also makes it very clear that if we are going to follow Him down here, it means to forsake all. He said that foxes have holes and birds have nests, but He didn't have a place to lay His head. He said that if we are going to follow Him, we must take up our cross -- not His Cross -- our own cross, and follow Him. If we suffer with Him down here, we shall reign with Him up there. He was despised and rejected. He was a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief. He said His followers are going to be in the world but not of the world and that the world will hate them. He made all of that very clear. He never said that it would be easy for His followers down here.

The professing church, instead of taking the position of Christ, has gone out into the world, boasting that they are going to convert the world. They, of course, haven't done it in over nineteen hundred years. In their attempt they always try to popularize religion, make it very attractive to the world. You will find that today there are churches using all kinds of devices to attract the ungodly. Today music has come down to the level of the world. They say, "We have to do this to win the world." Who told them they were going

to win the world? I'm not talking about liberal churches now -- they went off the track years ago -- I am talking about fundamental churches. Today fundamental churches are going off the track. In them you will find enemies of the Word of God! Although they wouldn't dare attack the Bible, they level their attack against the man who is preaching the Word of God.

There are tragic stories everywhere. I know a deacon in a church who has already destroyed three preachers. One man left broken in health, another simply left the ministry, and the third resigned. I know a minister who is selling second-hand cars. He says he would rather deal with second-hand cars than with second-hand Christians. Friend, if you stand for the Word of God, you will find that the world won't love you. You will experience the hatred that Christ experienced. "These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended." He is warning them ahead of time in order to strengthen them and let them know what is coming. He loves them right on through to the very end, and He lets them know that He will be with them and that He understands what they are going through.

He knew they would have moments when they would be offended because of Him. He knew that Peter would deny Him that very night. He told His disciples what would happen in order to encourage them and to let them know that He would sustain them through it all. He forewarned them to establish their responsibility to God.

"They shall put you out of the synagogues" means excommunication.

In that day to be excommunicated was the worst that could happen to a religious Jew. It would cost these men to stand for the Lord Jesus Christ. The religious Jews would cast them out. My friend, I'm very candid to say again that if you are standing for Christ, it is going to cost you something.

Jesus again traces the source of the hatred. Because they do not know the Father, they do not know the Lord Jesus Christ. Also this is why the world hates the Word of God. This is why the world hates the genuine believer.

But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you [[John 16:4](#)].

He is letting them know what is coming and He is training them for what is to come. The Lord always prepares us, friend. During my years of being a pastor, I have learned that this is God's method. I have learned in my own experience and by watching others that the Lord trains and prepares us for that which lies ahead.

But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? [[John 16:5](#)].

It is true that Simon Peter had asked Him where He was going, but Peter had asked the question of a little child. He is saying that none of them has really discerned what is going to take place. None of them has asked intelligently, with spiritual perception.

But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart [[John 16:6](#)].

These men were letting the fact that He was going to leave them absolutely overwhelm them with sorrow. Friend, that is something which Christians today need to avoid. Many Christians let one experience embitter them. They experience some disappointment in an individual or in a church and are overwhelmed by sorrow and turn from God. Some people won't darken the door of a church because they are bitter over some incident in the past. Others who have lost loved ones remain constantly in mourning. This is not the way it should be. We are not to be overcome by sorrow.

Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you [[John 16:7](#)].

"It is expedient for you that I go away" -- in other words, it is better for you. Why was it best for the Lord Jesus to leave? I can suggest several reasons and I'm sure you can think of more. One of the reasons is this: His purpose in coming to this world was to die -- ". . . the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" ([Mark 10:45](#)). When this was accomplished, He went back to the Father because He had finished the work He was sent to do. Then, there is another reason: when He came to this earth, He took upon Himself our humanity. God is omnipresent, but Jesus limited Himself by becoming a man. That means that, when He was in Galilee, He could not be down in Bethany. Remember that Mary and Martha reminded Him of that when they said that, if He had been there, their brother would not have died. In other words, if the Lord Jesus were in the world today in His human body, He couldn't be here where I am and with you where you are at the same time.

Therefore, He tells them He will send the Holy Spirit to them. The Holy Spirit will be in all places. He is right with me today and He is with you today. Jesus says this is better. He will send the Comforter, the Paraclete, and He will come to us and dwell in us.

When the Holy Spirit comes, He will perform several ministries, one of which He mentions here:

And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

Of sin, because they believe not on me;

Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;

Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged [[John 16:8-11](#)].

The Greek word for "reprove" is *elegcho* which means "to convict." I counted that word used in "The Trial of Socrates," as recorded by Plato, and found it twenty-three times. It is a legal term. When the Holy Spirit is come, He will convict the world in the way a judge or a prosecuting attorney presents evidence to bring a conviction. The Spirit of God wants to present evidence in your heart and in my heart to bring us to a place of conviction, and that, of course, means a place of decision. There must be a conviction before we can turn in faith and trust to Jesus Christ.



In the present ministry of the Holy Spirit in the world, He will convict the world of three things: sin, righteousness, and judgment. Our Lord explains for us what that sin means. "Sin, because they believe not on me." What is the greatest sin in all the world? Murder? No. Who are the greatest sinners in this age? We've had some rascals, haven't we? Every age has had rascals. We might point out Hitler, or Stalin, or Karl Marx, or the Mafia. Well, who is the greatest sinner today? I want to say to you very carefully that you could be the greatest sinner living today. You may say, "Now wait a minute, preacher, you can't say that about me! I'm no rascal; I'm a law-abiding citizen." The question is this: Have you accepted Christ? Unbelief is a state and there is no remedy if you refuse to trust Christ. "Of sin, because they believe not on me." If you do not trust Him, you are lost. It is just as simple as that. It is just as important as that. This is a decision that every man must make. The man today, whoever he is, if he is rejecting Jesus Christ, is, in the sight of God, the greatest sinner. Remember that Jesus said, "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin" ([John 15:22](#)). Everyone who has ever heard the gospel is responsible for his decision concerning Jesus Christ. To reject Christ is sin.

Secondly, He will convict the world of righteousness. Jesus Christ was delivered for our offenses and was raised again for our justification (see [Rom. 4:25](#)). Jesus Christ returned to the Father because He had completed His work here. When He died on the Cross, He died a judgment death. He took my guilt and your guilt and He died in our place. He was delivered for our offenses. But He was raised for our justification. He was raised from the dead that you and I might not only have our sins subtracted, but so that we might have His righteousness added. That is very important because you and I need righteousness. It is not enough to have our sins forgiven. We cannot stand in God's presence if we are nothing more than pardoned criminals. Christ has made over to us His righteousness. That is the righteousness Paul spoke of: ". . . that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" ([Phil 3:8-9](#)). He not only subtracts our sin, but He adds His righteousness. If we are to have any standing before God, we must be in Christ and He is our righteousness. Either we have as much right in heaven as Christ Himself has, or we have no right there at all. He was delivered for our offenses, and He was raised again for our justification (righteousness).

Thirdly, He convicts the world of judgment. Does this mean that judgment is coming some day? No, not in this verse. "Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." The prince of this world, Satan, has already been judged. It is difficult for a great many believers to understand that we live in a judged world. One hears people say that they'll take their chances. They act as if they are on trial. My friend, you are not on trial. God has already declared you a lost sinner, and He has already judged you -- "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" ([Rom. 6:23](#)). We live in a world that has already been judged and is like the man waiting in death row for his execution. The judgment against all of us is "Guilty" because all our own righteousnesses are as filthy rags in the sight of God. If we had to stand before God in our own filthy rags, we would not only be ashamed of ourselves, but we would also see how guilty we are.

Remember that Paul reasoned with old Felix concerning judgment to come. That frightened him. Today many people don't like to hear about judgment, and they resent it a great deal. The lost world hates many things about God: for instance, His omnipotence. They don't like the fact that it is His universe and He is running it His way. They don't like it that God saves by grace and that man has already been declared lost. These are the three things of which the Holy Spirit convicts the world today.

I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you [[John 16:12-14](#)].

We don't know it all. We are to keep growing in grace and in the knowledge of Him. How can we do it? Just reading the Bible is not the complete answer; the Holy Spirit must be our Teacher as we read.

The Spirit of God is the Spirit of Truth. He will lead and guide you into all truth. He guided the apostles just as the Lord said He would, and we find these truths in the Epistles. The Spirit of God came to these men at Pentecost, and He guided them in the truth both in their preaching and in their writing.

We can see how this was fulfilled in the apostles. The ministry of the Holy Spirit has been to complete the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Epistles glorify Christ and show Him as the Head of the church. They speak of His coming again to establish His Kingdom. The Epistles are the unfolding of the person and ministry of Christ. They also tell of things to come and certainly the Book of Revelation does this.

Notice the seven steps that are here: (1) The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, has come; (2) He will guide you into all truth; (3) He will not speak of Himself; (4) He shall speak whatsoever He shall hear; (5) He will show you things to come; (6) He shall glorify Jesus; and (7) He shall receive of mine and show it unto you.

Since we have been told these steps, we have a way of testing what we hear and read. I listened to a man on a radio program saying, "We are having a Holy Ghost revival; the Holy Ghost is working: the Holy Ghost is doing this and that." The minute he said all those things, I knew the Holy Ghost was not working. Why? Because the Lord Jesus made it very clear that the Holy Ghost will not speak of Himself. Then how can you tell when the Holy Spirit is working? He will glorify Christ. My friend, when in a meeting or a Bible study you suddenly get a glimpse of the Lord Jesus and He becomes wonderful, very real, and meaningful to you, that is the working of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "He shall glorify me."

All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you [[John 16:15](#)].

Again the Lord Jesus is making Himself equal with God. Whatever the Father has, Jesus has. "He shall take of mine" means He will take the things of God and show them unto us. Only He can do that. ". . . Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit . . ." ([1Cor. 2:9-10](#)). The Spirit is the One who searches the deep things of God and He alone can show these things to us.

A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father [[John 16:16](#)].

What did He mean? He meant that He would be arrested, and they would be scattered like sheep and separated from Him. He'd be crucified and buried. He would be absent a little while and they wouldn't see Him. On the third day He would come back, and so in a little while they would see Him. This has a fuller, richer, deeper meaning for us today.

Then said some of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father?

They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith.

Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye inquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me?

Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy [[John 16:17-20](#)].

They didn't know exactly what He meant. There was to be the little while that He was in the grave -- that was three days. Then there was to come another "little while" because He would go to the Father (which has been over nineteen hundred years now). He promised not to leave them comfortless, not to leave them orphans. He would be with them in the person of the Holy Spirit. He would take the things of Christ and make them real to them. That is where you and I live today. During these nineteen hundred years the Spirit of God has made Him real to multitudes. They have gone through sorrow; they have known what it is to be hated and to be ridiculed. He has brought them through that. Our sorrow shall be turned into joy.

A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.

And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you [[John 16:21-22](#)].

Regardless of where you are or who you are, if you have accepted Jesus, my friend, you are a child of God. If you are in sorrow and there are tears in your eyes, if you have a

broken heart, be assured that joy cometh in the morning. He is going to bring joy into your life. I think that when we get in His presence and look back on this life, if we have any regrets, it will be because we didn't suffer more for Him. The joy of His presence will overwhelm any sorrow we may have down here.

And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.

Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full [[John 16:23-24](#)].

This is the third time He speaks of praying in His name. We have already seen that "praying in my name" refers to one who is abiding in Him, obeying Him. You cannot simply tag His name on to the end of a request and expect to get what you ask. That is not what He is saying.

Remember that these disciples had never prayed to the Father in the name of Jesus. You and I today are to pray to God the Father in Jesus' name. Someone may ask whether we can't pray to Jesus. I think you can if you wish to, but why do you rob yourself of an intercessor? Jesus is up there at God's right hand for you, praying for you. That is the reason that we should pray to the Father in the name of Jesus.

These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father.

At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you:

For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God [[John 16:25-27](#)].

"The time cometh" -- He is nearing His crucifixion, the hour of redemption for which He has come into the world. After that, they are to ask the Father in Jesus' name. He is trying to teach them that the Father is not a hard taskmaster who is reluctant to answer prayer. He is saying in effect, "If you think that I have to ask the Father to be good to you and to be generous to you, you are wrong. The Father Himself loveth you. I don't have to ask Him to love you. He loves you already. The Father isn't hard to get along with. He loves you and that is the reason He will answer your prayer that you pray in My name."

Today God wants to hear and answer prayers, but they must come from the heart of one who loves Christ, and is in fellowship with Him, obeying Him.

I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father [[John 16:28](#)].

It is generally conceded that the key verse to the Gospel of John is [John 20:30-31](#), but I would like to put beside it this verse. The eternal Son came into the world for one purpose: to redeem man. When the mission was accomplished, He returned to the Father. This is the movement in the Gospel of John. He has painted a black picture of coming persecution but concludes the chapter with victory.

This verse is bigger than Bethlehem; it is wider than space. It reaches back into eternity, beyond the boundaries of space to the throne of God. Then it speaks of those few moments He spent on this earth. He came in out of eternity; He went back into eternity.

His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb.

Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God [[John 16:29-30](#)].

It should be plain for us to understand that the Lord Jesus is God manifest in the flesh. There is this great conviction coming over the disciples. They are convinced of the facts. They have seen that He has come forth from the Father and that He has come into the world. He is the Messiah; He is the Savior He claims to be. However, they still do not understand the dark waters of death through which He must pass, nor the door of resurrection and ascension back into the Father's glory. They still don't quite comprehend it. But after nineteen hundred years do we comprehend it?

Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe?

Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me [[John 16:31-32](#)].

The hour was coming when these men would all scatter. They would leave Him alone; and yet He was not alone "because the Father is with me." That is one of the great mysteries. God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself (see [2Cor. 5:19](#)). That is a great truth, and it is also equally true that on the Cross Jesus cried out, ". . . My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" ([Mark 15:34](#)), which is a quotation from [Psalm 22](#). The explanation is, "But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel" ([Ps. 22:3](#)). Jesus Christ was made sin for us, friend. There was a rent in the Godhead as well as a rent in the veil. Yet at that very moment, God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself.

This is a mystery that the human mind cannot understand. Friends, we do not have enough brains to comprehend the redemption that He wrought on the Cross. No wonder God wrapped the mantle of night around that Cross as if to say, "You will never be able to enter into what is happening here." I believe that throughout the endless ages of eternity you and I will continually understand something new and wonderful about the death of the Lord Jesus for us. It will cause us to get down on our faces before Him afresh and anew.

These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world [[John 16:33](#)].

Peace. He closes with peace. The child of God can have peace in this life because peace is found in Christ and in no other place. You won't find peace in the church. You won't find peace in Christian service. Peace is found in the person of Jesus Christ.

"In the world ye shall have tribulation." Our Lord made that very clear. There is no peace in the world, only trouble. He was right, wasn't He? But He has overcome the world! His victory is our victory.

I hear so much today about the victorious life. The only One who ever lived a victorious life was Christ. You and I cannot live it. We can let Him live it in us -- that is all. When you and I learn to identify ourselves with Him and come into close fellowship with Him, then we will begin to experience the peace of God in our hearts. Also we will be of good cheer. There is trouble in the world but in our lives there will be joy. Peace and joy! How important they are. "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

## Chapter 17

**THEME:** The Lord's Prayer -- Jesus prays for Himself; Jesus prays for disciples; Jesus prays for His church

We now come to one of the most remarkable chapters in the Bible. It is the longest prayer in the Bible, although it would take you only three minutes to read it. I think that is a good indication of the length of public prayers. If you can't say all you've got to say in three minutes, then you've got too much to say. I'll be very frank with you. I think brief prayers, thought out right to the point, are more effective than these long, rambling ones we hear. No wonder prayer meetings are as dead as a dodo bird!

The Upper Room Discourse is like climbing a staircase or like climbing a mountain, climaxing in this prayer. I would like to quote to you what others have said about this great chapter.

Matthew Henry: "It is the most remarkable prayer following the most full and consoling discourse ever uttered on the earth."

Martin Luther: "This is truly beyond measure a warm and hearty prayer. He opens the depths of His heart, both in reference to us and to His Father, and He pours them all out. It sounds so honest, so simple. It is so deep, so rich, so wide. No one can fathom it."

Philip Melancthon, another of the reformers: "There is no voice which has ever been heard, either in heaven or in earth, more exalted, more holy, more fruitful, more sublime than the prayer offered up by the Son to God Himself."

This is the prayer which John Knox read over and over in his lifetime. When he was on his deathbed, his wife asked him. "Where do you want me to read?" He replied, "Read where I first put my anchor down, in the seventeenth chapter of John." We have the record of many others who have read it over and over. Dr. Fisher, who was bishop of Rochester under Henry VIII, had this read as the last portion of Scripture just before his martyrdom.

This is a great portion of Scripture. I feel wholly and totally inadequate to deal with this prayer. It is His high priestly intercession for us. It is a revelation to us of the

communication which, I think, constantly passes between the Lord Jesus and the Father in heaven. His entire life was a life of prayer. He began His ministry by going into a solitary place to pray. Often He went up into a mountain to pray and spent the night in prayer. He is our great Intercessor. He prays for you and for me. If you forgot to pray this morning, He didn't. He prayed for you this morning.

God always hears and answers Jesus' prayer just the way He prays it. God answered my prayer also, but not always the way I pray it -- sometimes He must answer my prayer with a no, or He may accomplish what I ask by a completely different method or at a different time. However, Jesus said, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me" ([John 11:41-42](#)).

### **The Lord's Prayer -- Jesus Prays For Himself (17:1-5)**

I want you to notice that it is not out of line nor even a mark of selfishness to pray for one's self. I believe that when you and I go to God in prayer, we need to get our own hearts and lives right with God. We need to get in tune with heaven, as it were. Every instrument should be tuned up before it is played. Before you and I begin to pray for others, we need to pray for ourselves. That is not selfishness; it is essential.

These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee [[John 17:1](#)].

"These words spake Jesus." Which words? The chapters we have just read, chapters 13 -- 16. Now He stops speaking to the disciples, and He speaks to the Father. Although He is speaking to the Father in this chapter, He is speaking to Him for their benefit -- and for our benefit also. He is our great Intercessor today. We may wonder what He is praying for. Well, here it is. This is the Lord's Prayer, the prayer that He prays to the Father.

The prayer in the Sermon on the Mount is not really the Lord's Prayer. It is the prayer that He taught to the disciples. When Jesus begins with "Our Father," He means this for all the believers. However, Jesus calls God "Father" in a different sense. After His resurrection He said to Mary, "I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" ([John 20:17](#)). In other words, "I have not yet ascended to your Father, yours by the new birth, and to My Father, Mine because of My position in the Trinity." Also, it could never be the prayer of Jesus to say, "Forgive us our debts, our sins." He never had any sins. He could not pray that prayer. By the same token, you and I can never pray this prayer of [John 17](#). This is His prayer.

Apparently our Lord prayed this prayer as He was walking along. It says that He "lifted up his eyes to heaven," which means that His eyes were open. Of course we can pray without bowing our heads and closing our eyes. We can pray as we walk or as we work or as we drive.

Now notice His prayer. It begins, "Father, the hour is come." What hour? Well, the hour that had been set back yonder in eternity. As He speaks, the clock is striking the hour that was set way back in eternity, because He was the Lamb of God slain before the



foundation of the world. It was arranged back there; now "the hour is come." Remember that when He began His ministry at the wedding of Cana, His mother said to Him, "They have no wine." His answer to her was, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come" ([John 2:3-4](#)). Now the hour has come, the hour when He will pay for your sins and mine. It is the hour when all the creation of God will see the love of God displayed and lavished as He takes your sins and my sins upon Himself and dies a vicarious, substitutionary, redemptive death for you and for me. And it won't end there; it will go on to the Resurrection.

"The hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee." The death of Christ will demonstrate that God is not the brutal bully the liberal theologians talk about in the Old Testament, but that He is a loving Father who so loves the world that He gives His only begotten Son. Then the Son will be raised from the dead, ascend back into heaven, and He will be given a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow to Him. "Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee." Oh, the wealth of meaning that is here!

As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him [[John 17:2](#)].

This is a startling statement. He has power over all flesh! He could make this universe and every individual in it bow to Him. He could bring us all into subjection to Him and make robots out of all of us. Although that is the last thing He would want to do, He has the power over all flesh.

The church is God's love gift to Jesus Christ. So He gives eternal life to as many "as thou hast given him." This brings up the question of election and free will, and I don't want to go into that extensively. There are extreme Calvinists and extreme Arminians, and the truth is probably somewhere between the two. If God would somehow reveal to me who are the elect ones, I would give the gospel only to them. But God does not do this. He has said that whosoever will may come. That is a legitimate offer to every person. You have no excuse to offer at all if you will not come to Him. It will be your condemnation that you turned down the offer that God has made to you.

And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent [[John 17:3](#)].

Does election shut out certain people? No. Life eternal is to know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. Do you have a desire to know the true God and Jesus Christ? Then you are not shut out. You must be one of the elect. He gives eternal life to those who have heard the call and have responded down in their hearts. They have come to Christ of their own free will.

"That they might know thee." It is not the amount of knowledge you have, but the kind of knowledge that is important. It is whom you know. Do you know Jesus Christ? In the same way, it is not the amount of faith you have but the kind of faith that is important. There is a song called "Only Believe." Only believe what? Only believe in the only One, the Lord Jesus Christ. I quote Spurgeon again: "It is not thy joy in Christ that saves thee. It is Christ. It is not thy faith in Christ, though that be the instrument. It is Christ's blood and merit." It is Christ who saves. One can believe in the wrong thing. It is the object of

faith which is so important. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ." Now faith comes by hearing, hearing the Word of God. What does the Word of God say? The gospel is that Jesus died for our sins, was buried, and rose again. Those are the facts. Our knowledge of the facts and our response to that knowledge is faith. Faith is trusting Christ as our own Savior.

Life eternal is to know God and to know Jesus Christ. Jesus is His name as Savior, and Christ is His title -- the Messiah, the King of Israel. To know Him means to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ. When we move on in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, we come to the place of assurance. Anyone without the assurance of salvation is either unsaved or is just a babe in Christ. They need to move on to the place where they know that they are saved. Life eternal is to know the only genuine God and to know Jesus Christ. This is the reason that the study of the Word of God is so important. Many people stay on the fringe of things and are never sure they are saved.

I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do [[John 17:4](#)].

The Lord Jesus is handing in His final report to the Father. He hasn't died on the Cross yet; but, as far as God is concerned, He speaks of things which are not as if they are. Future tense for God is just as accurate as past tense. Our Lord Jesus is going to the Cross to die and then will rise again. On the Cross, He said, "It is finished" ([John 19:30](#)). That means our redemption was finished. He has done everything that was necessary. We can put a period there. We cannot add a thing to His finished work. Therefore, the gospel of salvation is not what God is asking you to do, but what God is telling you that He has already done for you. It is your response to that which saves you.

And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was [[John 17:5](#)].

In [Philippians 2](#), it speaks of Jesus emptying Himself. Some try to teach that He emptied Himself of His deity. John makes it very clear that the Word became flesh. That little baby in Mary's lap is God, and He could have spoken this universe out of existence. He wasn't just 99.9% God; He was, and is, 100% God. So of what did He empty Himself? He emptied Himself of His prerogatives of deity; He laid aside His glory.

At Christmas we make a great deal of the shepherds and the angels and the wise men who came to see Him. Friend, that is not the way it should have been. He is the Lord of glory, and the whole creation should have been there; every human being on the face of the earth should have been there. People will come from all parts of a country and even all parts of the world for the funeral of a great political leader. The whole world should have been at the birth of the Lord of glory when He came to earth. Although He could have claimed such homage, instead He laid aside His glory. Now He is ready to return to heaven, back to the glory.

### **Jesus Prays For Disciples (17:6-19)**

I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word [[John 17:6](#)].

Notice this: "to as many as thou hast given him" ([v. 2](#)): "unto the men which thou gavest me . . . and thou gavest them me" ([v. 6](#)); "for them which thou hast given me" ([v. 9](#)); "whom thou hast given me" ([v. 11](#)); and "those that thou gavest me" ([v. 12](#)). We are back to the great doctrine of election. Jesus talked to the Father about it. It was a private conversation, but He wanted the disciples to hear it and to know about it. I don't know as much about election as maybe I should know. I've read Hodge, Calvin, Thornwall, Shedd, and Strong on the subject, and they don't seem to know much more about it. The reason we know so little about election is because it is God's side, and there are a lot of things that God knows that we don't know.

It is a wonderful thing to be able to listen to this prayer and to know that Jesus is at God's right hand talking to the Father about us. The Lord Jesus has talked to the Father about you today, if you are one of His.

There is a mystical relationship between the Lord Jesus and His own. They belong to the Father and were given to Jesus Christ. I can't fathom its meaning. What a wonderful relationship!

Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.

For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me [[John 17:7-8](#)].

The Lord had given them the Words of the Father. That is important. He had not given them property or money or an automobile, but the Words of the Father. Jesus testifies here that these disciples believed that He came from the Father. They knew who He was. They did not understand His purpose and certainly not His death and resurrection, but they had made tremendous advances during the three years they had been with Him. They knew He had come from God, and they believed that God had sent Him.

I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine [[John 17:9](#)].

I will make a startling statement which is no more startling than what He made: Jesus Christ does not pray for the world today. His ministry of intercession is for His own who are in the world. He doesn't pray for the world; He died for the world. What more could He do for the world? He has sent the Holy Spirit into the world to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. Jesus Christ prays for His own.

And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them [[John 17:10](#)].

The whole purpose of our salvation is to bring glory to Jesus Christ.

And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are [[John 17:11](#)].

He prays for two wonderful things. He prays for us to be kept. You will be kept because you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and because your Savior is praying for you.

His other request is that we should be one. He prays for the unity of believers. He's not praying for an ecumenical movement or that we all join the same denomination. There has been much wrong teaching about this. First of all, He prays to the Father that His own might be one. Notice that He isn't praying to us or to some church authority; He is praying to the Father. And He prays that we should be one "as we are"; that is, as the Father and the Son are one. The Father has answered every prayer of His Son, and He has answered this one. There is an organic unity which God has made. The Holy Spirit takes all true believers and baptizes them into the body of Christ, identifies them in the body of Christ. The disgrace of it all is that down here the believers are pretty well divided. But there is only one true church, and every believer in Jesus Christ is a member of that church. It is called the body of Christ.

While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled [[John 17:12](#)].

"Those that thou gavest me" -- we have election mentioned again. There are certain things which I believe that to me are not contradictory, but they certainly are paradoxical. Election and free will happen to be one of those. I wish you could have met me when I graduated from seminary. I was a smart boy then and I even had the answer to election and free will. But I have a little more sense than I had then, and I realize that we simply do not understand it.

Judas Iscariot is, of course, "the son of perdition." He fulfilled the prophecies concerning him.

And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves [[John 17:13](#)].

Friend, God does not want us to be long-faced, solemn Christians. He came that our lives might be filled with joy -- His joy.

I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world [[John 17:14](#)].

The Word of God causes problems in the world today. The Bible is the most revolutionary Book in the world. It is revolutionary to teach that you cannot save yourself, that only Christ can save you. And you can't make this world better. Only Jesus Christ can do that. That's revolutionary, and the world doesn't want to hear that. They'd rather plant a few flowers and try to clean up pollution. The problem is that the pollution is in the human heart.

I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil [[John 17:15](#)].

This really should read "from the evil one." Again it is startling to note that He does not pray that we should be taken out of the world. God gets glory by keeping you and me in

the world today. We think of the Rapture as wonderful, and it will be. We think of the Rapture as bringing glory to God, and it will. But let's understand one thing: God gets glory by keeping you and me in the world. If you knew Vernon McGee like He knows Vernon McGee, you'd know it is a miracle for God to keep me in the world. We long for the Rapture. In [Revelation 22:17](#) it says that the Spirit and the bride say, "Come." The Holy Spirit is weary of this world, He is grieved. He says, "Come." We also are weary, and we who are the bride of Christ say, "Come." But Jesus prays not that we should be taken out of the world, but that we should be kept from the evil one, Satan. And I wouldn't want to be here for a minute if my Lord weren't keeping me from the evil one.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could really learn this lesson? We cry and whimper because things are hard down here. Sure they are. He said they would be hard -- "but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" ([John 16:33](#)). I suspect that every twenty-four hours there is a great hallelujah meeting in heaven, and the angels say, "Isn't it marvelous that McGee is still being kept. It would be so easy to take him out of the world, but it is a real miracle to keep him in the world." If we could learn that, it would enable us to endure more easily our problems and tensions and difficulties and temptations. The Lord Jesus has prayed to keep us in the world and to protect us from the evil one.

They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world [[John 17:16](#)].

The measure in which we as believers realize this, the more completely we fulfill His will and accomplish His purpose.

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth [[John 17:17](#)].

Sanctify means to set apart. The believer is not of the world; he is set apart. The thought has reference to the task rather than the person; it is a commitment to the task. The believer is set apart by the Word of God. That is, the Word reveals the mind of God. As you read the Word, you are led to set yourself apart for a particular ministry. We can serve Him only as we know His Word and are obedient to it.

As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth [[John 17:18-19](#)].

We have been sent out into the world to bear a witness. He sets Himself apart to be identified with us, and we ought to be identified with Him in this world.

### **Jesus Prays For His Church (17:20-26)**

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word [[John 17:20](#)].

He had you and me in mind. Now, many centuries later, we can know our great High Priest is praying for us.

That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me [[John 17:21](#)].

This prayer has been answered. The church is an organic unity. Believers are one in Christ, for the church is one body. The minute any sinner trusts Christ, that sinner is put into the body of Christ. If believers would manifest that union to the world, the world would be more impressed with Christ. Too often the world sees believers hating each other which may well be one of the reasons they will not accept Christ.

And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me [[John 17:22-23](#)].

"I in them, and thou in me." How wonderful! Only the Spirit of God can accomplish that. The unity that exists between the Father and the Son is the unity that is to exist between the believer and the Lord Jesus Christ! "And hast loved them, as thou hast loved me" -- means that God loves you as much as He loves the Lord Jesus Christ. That boggles the mind!

Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world [[John 17:24](#)].

It will be heaven to be with Him in perfect fellowship. I take it that this was God's purpose in creating man. There are other creatures in the universe and on the earth, but God made man a creature with whom He could have fellowship. God created man with a free will; and, even though man sinned, God wants his fellowship. Heaven is going to be wonderful, and it will be important that every one of His sheep is there with Him. Each one will have his contribution to make.

To behold the glory of the Lord Jesus will be the satisfaction of the believer. Moses asked to see the glory of God. Philip asked to see the Father. Sometimes we get a glimpse of glory in a rainbow or a sunset. Think what it will be when we come into His presence and behold His glory! That is the goal to which we are moving.

O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me [[John 17:25](#)].

Being sent from the Father actually embraces His entire mission of redemption. Anyone who is a believer knows that the Father has sent Him, and the purpose was for Him to die for our sins.

And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them [[John 17:26](#)].

The last thing He mentions is that His love might be in our hearts and in our lives. We talk so much about grace and about faith, and rightly so; yet the great desire of His heart is that His love should be manifest in the lives of those whom He has redeemed. That

should put us down on our faces before Him. My friend, how much of His love is manifest in you?

In review, this is what this prayer says about believers and the world:

1. Given to Christ out of the world ([v. 6](#))
2. Left in the world ([v. 11](#))
3. Not of the world ([v. 14](#))
4. Hated by the world ([v. 14](#))
5. Kept from the evil one ([v. 15](#))
6. Sent into the world ([v. 18](#))
7. Manifest in unity before the world ([v. 23](#))

These are the requests of Christ for His own:

1. Preservation ([v. 11](#))
2. Joy -- fullness of the Spirit ([v. 13](#))
3. Deliverance -- from evil ([v. 15](#))
4. To be set apart -- "sanctify" ([v. 17](#))
5. Unity -- "be one" -- (this is not union) ([v. 21](#))
6. Fellowship -- "be with me" ([v. 24](#))
7. Satisfaction -- "behold my glory" ([v. 24](#))

The Lord Jesus Christ is our great High Priest. This is the great truth of the Epistle to the Hebrews. In the Old Testament economy the high priest wore an ephod of beauty and glory, which was joined on each shoulder by two onyx stones with the names of the tribes of Israel engraved on them. Thus he carried the names of the children of Israel with him when he went into the presence of God. This speaks of the strength and power of the high priest. [Hebrews 7:25](#) tells us about Jesus Christ, our High Priest: "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Christ is able to save us, you see. He has strength and power.

Also on the breastplate of the high priest were twelve precious stones, arranged three in a row in four rows across his breast. On each was the name of a tribe of Israel. When the high priest went into God's presence wearing the breastplate, he pictured the Lord Jesus Christ who is at the right hand of God interceding for us. The Lord not only carries us on His shoulders, the place of strength and power, but He also carries us on His breast, on His heart, which speaks of His love. He has all power, and He loves us!

## Chapter 18

**THEME:** Arrest and trial of Jesus -- the arrest in Gethsemane; trial before Annas; first denial by Simon Peter; trial before high priest; second denial by Simon Peter; trial before Pilate

We have now concluded the Upper Room Discourse which began in [John 13](#) and was climaxed with this wonderful prayer of the Lord Jesus in [John 17](#). Augustine made this statement about the discourse: "It is easiest in regards to words but most profound in regards to ideas." That certainly is a true statement.



We come now to the fifth division of this Gospel of John: the witness of Jesus to the world. It includes chapters 18 to 20. We will see in this chapter that He is arrested and taken before the high priest. The presentation here is different from that in the synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke). The emphasis in those three Gospels is upon the humanity of Christ, His human nature, and upon the sufferings of the Savior. In the first three Gospel records, as He approaches Jerusalem, He says He is going there to die. He mentions His death, His treatment, His abuse in the hand of the Gentiles, and then His bodily resurrection.

In the Gospel of John, the emphasis is upon the deity of the Lord Jesus. He is the God-man in this Gospel, and the emphasis here is upon His glory. In His arrest, His death, His resurrection we will see His glory. Remember how often He stated in His discourse that He was returning to the Father. This is in accord with the emphasis on His glory.

### **The Arrest In Gethsemane; Trial Before Annas (18:1-14)**

When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples [[John 18:1](#)].

In these passages we will find a blending of His majesty and His meekness. He seems to have spent His nights under the open sky. Why did He leave Jerusalem and cross the brook Cedron? Apparently He was accustomed to going there.

And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples [[John 18:2](#)].

Luke tells us in [Luke 21:37](#), "And in the day time he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called the mount of Olives." And again, [Luke 22:39](#): "And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives . . ." He would need to cross the brook Cedron.

Our Lord crossed over the brook Cedron after Judas had made his agreement to betray Him. Perhaps you remember another crossing of this same brook by one who was betrayed -- King David, when his son Absalom led in a rebellion and Ahithophel, his friend and counsellor, betrayed him.

As far as we can tell, Jesus never spent a night in the city of Jerusalem, in the walled city. The last week of His life, He went to Bethany and stayed with His friends. Even on this last night, He left the walled city to go to the place called the Garden of Gethsemane. He is going to this quiet place in order to give His enemies an opportunity to take Him. They wanted to lay hands on Him but, because they were afraid of the people, they wouldn't dare lay hands on Him in the temple or in the streets of Jerusalem.

Notice that John does not include the agony in the garden. John does not record His praying and His extreme suffering. Rather he speaks of the glory. He is putting the emphasis on the deity of Christ, whereas the other Gospels emphasize His humanity. You will notice that Jesus will not resist arrest. He is the Lamb of God who offers no resistance. ". . . as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth" ([Isa. 53:7](#)). The dignity of His person at this time is absolutely overwhelming.

Remember in previous incidents, when the enemies of the Lord Jesus tried to close in on Him, He hid Himself. Apparently He could just disappear miraculously. Now, He lays Himself wide open to be taken. This is very important for us to note.

Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons [[John 18:3](#)].

Luke tells us what He said: ". . . Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves?" ([Luke 22:52](#)). It says that a band of men came out. A band is the tenth part of a legion and would consist of approximately five hundred men. Matthew says that a great multitude came with Judas. Why would they come with such a multitude and with swords and clubs? That crowd knew that He had performed miracles, and they thought that, if they would bring along a big enough company of armed men, they could capture Him. Now notice the dignity of our Lord.

Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? [[John 18:4](#)].

My friend, do you think this is just a poor, weak man who has been trapped by some clever religious rulers and the power of Rome? If He had not yielded Himself, all the weapons those men had would have been absolutely useless and worthless.

They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them ([John 18:5](#)). I don't want to pass over this because I wouldn't want you to miss this for anything in the world. They call Him "Jesus of Nazareth." They do not accord Him the dignity that belongs to Him. They refuse to call Him the Christ. Well, it's all right, because Jesus is a name that is above every name. The day is coming when those on earth and even those under the earth, in hell itself, will bow the knee to the name of Jesus. But now, this crowd would not acknowledge Him as the Savior, the Christ, the Son of the living God.

They didn't know Him. The thing that is strange above everything else is that Judas didn't know Him at first. Why didn't Judas know Him? Paul says, "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" ([2Cor. 4:3-4](#)). We are told that the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned. I believe that Judas did not know Him because He stood there as the Lord of glory.

As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground [[John 18:6](#)].

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" ([John 1:14](#)). Even in this dark hour when He was yielding Himself as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, He revealed His deity -- and they fell backwards! He revealed to these men that He was absolutely in charge, and they could not arrest Him without His permission. They didn't fall forward to worship Him. They fell backward in fear and in absolute

dismay. I think there was utter confusion for a moment there when they fell backward. They are seeing not simply Jesus of Nazareth but the God-man, the Lord of glory.

This fulfills prophecy. "The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell" ([Ps. 27:1-2](#)). This is the God-ward side. Then in [Psalm 35:4](#) we see the man-ward side. "Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul: let them be turned back and brought to confusion that devise my hurt." Then listen to [Psalm 40:14](#): "Let them be ashamed and confounded together that seek after my soul to destroy it; let them be driven backward and put to shame that wish me evil." What a fulfillment we have here when our Lord for a brief moment reveals His glory to them. They are seeking Jesus of Nazareth. Well, here He is, but He is the Lord of glory.

My friend, whom do you see? Do you know who He is? The unsaved man doesn't know Him. People may even read the Bible and be very religious and very moral and not see that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth.

Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way:

That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none [[John 18:7-9](#)].

Notice His dignity. He is in charge of everything. He is even telling them whom to arrest and whom not to arrest. There had been the prophecy that the Shepherd would be taken and the sheep scattered, and Jesus had said that He had lost none. The disciples would not be captured. Isn't it interesting that they weren't? One would think they would have been brought in as witnesses or accomplices, but they were not.

Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus [[John 18:10](#)].

Why didn't they arrest Simon Peter for this?

Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my father hath given me, shall I not drink it? [[John 18:11](#)].

Dr. Luke tells us that Jesus touched the man's ear and healed him. But why didn't they arrest Peter? Because the Lord Jesus said, "You let these men go." He is in command.

Simon Peter, the poor, ignorant fisherman! He probably was really smarting inside. He had asked the Lord why he couldn't go with Him where He was going. He had said he would lay down his life for the Lord, and he meant it. But the Lord had told him that he didn't know himself, that he would deny his Lord that night. Oh, it's so easy to get Christians to dedicate and rededicate their lives to the Lord. Simon Peter would have come forward at every invitation, and he would have meant it. The problem is that we

cannot produce this in our own strength. This was Paul's experience, too. He said that to will was present with him, but he couldn't find how to perform it. It is only the power of the Holy Spirit that can produce the life yielded to Christ. I think Peter was smarting inside and thinking, "I'll show Him that I'll die for Him."

Peter's a good fisherman. He can throw a net expertly, but he makes a sorry swordsman. He got an ear when he meant to get a head. Our Lord tells Peter to put up his sword. Earlier, when Jesus advised them to have swords, it was for their protection, not for His defense. Our Lord is yielding Himself into the hands of His captors. He is getting ready, as He says, to drink the cup which His Father has given Him.

There are several "cups" mentioned in the Scriptures. There is the cup of salvation: "I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD" ([Ps. 116:13](#)). Then there is the cup of consolation: ". . . neither shall men give them the cup of consolation to drink for their father or for their mother" ([Jer. 16:7](#)). Also there is the cup of joy: "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over" ([Ps. 23:5](#)). This cup which our Lord was to drink was given Him by the Father. It was a dreadful cup, and Jesus prayed in Gethsemane, ". . . O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me . . ." ([Matt. 26:39](#)). This is the cup of judgment He bore for us on the Cross. Everyone who turns his back on Jesus Christ must drink that cup of judgment himself. Jesus drank it for us although it was totally repulsive to Him. Remember that He was perfect humanity, absolutely sinless, and yet He drank the hated cup because it was the cup of your sin and my sin. There is still another cup, the cup of judgment which is yet to come on this world. I believe the seven vials or bowls of wrath, which are to be poured upon the wicked as described in Revelation are the fulfillment of this. "Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup" ([Ps. 11:6](#)). This is the cup of his anger. "For thus saith the LORD God of Israel unto me; Take the wine cup of this fury at my hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send thee, to drink it" ([Jer. 25:15](#)).

Notice again what our Lord says to Peter, "Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" It is not, "He is the judge, and I'm going to drink it by command," but, "Shall I not drink this cup my Father gives me?" There is no willingness higher than that. Let us not get the idea that the Savior did this reluctantly. [Hebrews 12:2](#) says, ". . . who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus,  
and bound him,

And led him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to  
Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year [[John 18:12-13](#)].

The religious rulers were the ones who had plotted all this. Because they were afraid of the people, our Lord went outside the city to give them the opportunity they needed to arrest Him. He is going forward in His dignity and in His glory. They took Him and bound Him -- which wasn't necessary. He is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. He is the sheep before the shearers; He will not offer any resistance.

They led Him away to Annas first. Only John gives us that detail, as apparently he was in a position to see something that the others didn't see. Annas had been the high priest and was probably still in the quarters of the palace of the high priest. Secular history testifies to the fact that Annas was one of the most brilliant, one of the most clever, and one of the most satanic of all the high priests. Caiaphas was the one whom the Roman government accepted, but the real head of the religious group was old Annas. I believe that he was the real leader, a politician who knew how to handle Rome. It is my judgment that it was he who plotted the arrest, the trial, and the crucifixion of Jesus. The entire trial was a mockery, and I think Annas was behind it all.

What an injustice has been done to the Jews down through the centuries. They have been blamed for the crime of men like Annas, Caiaphas, and Pilate. I do not take the responsibility for the crimes of Jesse James just because he happened to be an American, do you? Romanism for centuries has called the Jewish people the "Christ-killers," which has been the basis for anti-Semitism in Europe. Yet they are not any more responsible than the Gentiles are. In the final analysis, we all are responsible for His death. He died for the sins of the world. There should be no pointing of the finger at any race or group of people.

Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people [[John 18:14](#)].

I believe John puts this in here to show us that it had already been predetermined that the Lord Jesus was to die. They had already decided that. Old Annas knew how to forge a charge against Jesus to get the death penalty from the Roman authorities. The whole trial was nothing but a mockery.

### **First Denial By Simon Peter (18:15-18)**

And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest [[John 18:15](#)].

That other disciple was John, obviously. John apparently had an "in" with those in Jerusalem, and this enabled him to get a pass for someone else to come in. I want you to see that John apparently was known in these circles, and for John to go in there was no temptation at all. However, it was fatal for Simon Peter to go in there. He was standing on the outside when John got the permission for him to come into the inner court. I want you to see this little byplay at the palace of Caiaphas.

But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter [[John 18:16](#)].

John had an entree, but Peter is a poor fisherman whom nobody knows, and he can't get in. John tells the girl at the gate that this is a friend of his, and so he brought Peter in. Simon Peter was scared to death. You see, John was at home here, but Simon Peter had never been in that crowd before. Peter has a big mouth, and he just has to talk. Remember the other Gospels tell us that the girls spot him as a Galilean because his speech betrays him. He talks too much. He's nervous in there. A little wisp of a girl makes him deny the Lord.

There is an application for us here. You and I have no right to put our little ideas of separation down on another Christian. Another Christian may be able to go where you cannot go. It was wrong for Simon Peter to go in there, but it was not wrong for John.

Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not [[John 18:17](#)].

She knows the followers of Jesus are there and assumes Peter is one of them. She just asks the question as he is about to go through the gate, "Aren't you one of this man's disciples?" He says, "I am not," and walks on through.

And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself [[John 18:18](#)].

Outside the palace grounds the people are gathered -- not many at that time of morning, but the guards are there to keep order. They build a fire, and Peter stands with them warming himself.

### **Trial Before High Priest (18:19-24)**

The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine.

Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing.

Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said [[John 18:19-21](#)].

The scene shifts back to the trial of the Lord Jesus. Notice the dignity of the Lord Jesus.

And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so?

Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me? [[John 18:22-23](#)].

He is subject to this kind of humiliation. He is yielding Himself to die for your sin and my sin. However, He does call their attention to the fact that what they are doing is illegal and contrary to the Mosaic Law. They have no witness that He has done evil, and yet they smite Him. They are the ones who are breaking the Law. For one thing, no trial is to begin at night nor end at night. A trial is not to begin and end on the same day. They are not to strike a prisoner who has not yet been proven guilty.

Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest [[John 18:24](#)].

John puts this little verse in to tell us again that it was Annas who bound Him. Annas is the one who plotted and planned all of this diabolical plot.

### **Second Denial By Simon Peter (18:25-27)**



And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples? He denied it, and said, I am not.

One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him?

Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew [[John 18:25-27](#)].

We learn from the other Gospels how Peter went out and wept bitterly. I think that he caught a glimpse of the face of our Lord all bloody and beaten, and he caught His eye. That is when he went out and cried like a baby. You know that if he was arguing with a kinsman of Malchus, he must have been pretty vehement. He denied his Lord. But, thank God, the Lord was on His way to die for him and had already told him that He had prayed so that Peter's faith would not fail.

Why is it that Simon Peter, who did a deed as dastardly as Judas, could make his way back to the Lord? Because he was a child of God, and it broke his heart to know what he had done. A child of God may get far from God, but God is never far from him. You may be dead to God, but God is never dead to you. He is always there and He is always available. The Lord never said to Peter, "I'm sorry, but because you failed Me, I just can't use you anymore." No, He appeared personally to Peter after His resurrection, and He elected Peter to preach the first sermon on the day of Pentecost. There has never been a sermon like it! Thank God for a Savior and a Lord like that. He will always take you back!

### **Trial Before Pilate (18:28-40)**

Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover [[John 18:28](#)].

There is quite an interesting byplay here that I want you to see. Here we see "religion" and the person of Jesus Christ side by side. Here is the One who has come to fulfill the Passover. He is going to die on the Cross because they are bringing the death sentence against Him. But, because they want to eat the Passover, these men won't go inside the judgment hall. That would pollute them. They will not do that. Are they meticulously religious! Yet they are plotting the death of the very One who is the fulfillment of the Passover! My friend, how this should cause you to search your heart at this time. Are you merely religious or are you joined to the Lord Jesus Christ?

There is another interesting byplay to watch here. The Jews absolutely would not go into the judgment hall and thus contaminate themselves, but they brought Jesus to be taken into the judgment hall to be tried. Also there is a change of scene in this drama from outside to inside and inside to outside. Watch it:

"Pilate then went out" ([v. 29](#)).

"Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again" ([v. 33](#)).

"And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews" ([v. 38](#)).

"Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him" ([John 19:1](#)).



"Pilate therefore went forth again" ([John 19:4](#)).  
"And went again into the judgment hall" ([John 19:9](#)).  
"He brought Jesus forth" ([John 19:13](#)).

Pilate didn't really like Jerusalem. He liked Caesarea which is on the seacoast and has a lovely beach, very much like Florida. During the feast, He would leave Caesarea and come up to Jerusalem, bringing his soldiers with him. Since he was the Roman governor, he was responsible for keeping order at this time when the Jews gathered from all over the world. That was the reason he was in Jerusalem at this time.

Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man?

They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee.

Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death:

That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die [[John 18:29-32](#)].

Pilate senses that something is wrong and he tries, as we would say, to get off the hook. He tells them to judge Jesus themselves. He couldn't understand what was taking place. The problem was that they wanted the death penalty and they had to admit that they were no longer the rulers and no longer had the authority to exact the death penalty. It is interesting that these men were forced to admit this after they had so arrogantly stated in [John 8:33](#): "We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man."

John tells us that this fulfilled what Jesus had prophesied. He had told the disciples that the Jewish religious rulers would condemn Him to death and would deliver Him to the Gentiles. He had predicted this months earlier; now He was here, being brought to Pilate, the representative of gentile Rome, by the religious rulers who wanted a death sentence. If the Jews had taken Jesus and had put Him to death according to their law, He would have been stoned to death. Read [Psalm 22](#) again and notice whether it is describing a death by stoning or a death by crucifixion. It is obviously crucifixion, with the piercing of the hands and feet and the agonies of hanging on a cross. The only ones who executed by crucifixion were the Romans. Jesus had to be delivered to the Romans to fulfill Old Testament prophecy.

Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews?

Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?

Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? [[John 18:33-35](#)].

Jesus had appealed to the head of this man, Pilate. He asked him the logical question of where he got his evidence. Pilate sneered at that and said the Jews had brought the

accusation. Now Jesus will appeal to this man's heart. Jesus is dealing with him, man to man.

Pilate was dumbfounded. He couldn't believe there was someone claiming to be the king of the Jews and that they would have the audacity to bring such a charge. Pilate is out on a limb and wants to get off. He would like to help Jesus. He is inside the court, alone with Jesus; the Jews are waiting outside because of their scruples about contaminating themselves. Pilate would be happy if Jesus would simply say He is not a king and that would get Pilate off the hook. Who is on trial? Pilate or Jesus?

Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence [[John 18:36](#)].

"My kingdom is not of this world." The preposition is the Greek ek, meaning "out of." Literally, He said "My kingdom is out of this world." He is not saying that His Kingdom is not going to be on this earth someday, as He is going to rule as King of kings and Lord of lords and ". . . the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" ([Isa. 11:9](#)). But His Kingdom is not going to be of this world system. It will not be a power structure built on politics. It will not come through worldly measures. Jesus will not be elected King by either the Democrats or the Republicans or by the United Nations. It is not going to be built by war and turmoil and hatred and bitterness. Pilate, himself, was a crooked politician who bought his job and was a puppet of Rome. He hated the Jews, but he was afraid to offend them because he might lose his job. But Jesus will not come to His Kingdom by political maneuvering. Jesus said, "If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight." He was offering no resistance. Peter had tried to defend Him, and Jesus had told him to put his sword in the sheath. He is not building His Kingdom out of the present political system.

Friend, the church cannot build His Kingdom either. The Bible teaches us clearly that in this present age Christ is gathering out a people for His name (see [Acts 15:14](#)). These are the ekklesia or the called-out ones, the church. They are called out of the world to live in the world but not of the world. The time will come when the Lord will completely remove the church from the world. Then, when Christ comes in His Kingdom, He will establish it!

Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice [[John 18:37](#)].

Pilate is definitely puzzled at this point. Jesus is still pleading with this man. He tells him that an essential of His Kingdom is truth. Listen to [Psalm 45:1-4](#): ". . . I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer. Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever. Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness. . . ."

Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all [[John 18:38](#)].

Was Pilate a cynic? Was he simply puzzled? He stood in the presence of the Lord Jesus who was and is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. John tells us later in his Gospel that he has written all these things so that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Friend, do you ask, "What is truth?" Is He truth to you? Have you faced reality in Him?

Again he took Jesus outside and declared, "I find in him no fault at all!"

But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews? [[John 18:39](#)].

He was trying desperately to escape making a decision. "Let me release Jesus to you, and that will settle it."

Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber [[John 18:40](#)].

Pilate didn't dream that these religious rulers would urge the people to demand that Barabbas be released. The contrast between them was too great. The Bible makes it clear that Pilate was assured that Jesus Christ was an innocent man.

"He knew that for envy they had delivered him" ([Matt. 27:18](#)).

". . . I am innocent of the blood of this just person . . ." ([Matt. 27:24](#)).

"For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy" ([Mark 15:10](#)).

"Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them" ([Luke 23:20](#)).

". . . I have found no cause of death in him . . ." ([Luke 23:22](#)).

". . . I find in him no fault at all" ([John 18:38](#)).

". . . From thenceforth Pilate sought to release him . . ." ([John 19:12](#)).

". . . Pilate, when he was determined to let him go" ([Acts 3:13](#)).

In spite of all this, Pilate did not have the courage to release Him.

## Chapter 19

**THEME:** Death of Jesus at Golgotha; burial in the tomb of Joseph

In this chapter we will see a great miscarriage of justice. Rome was noted throughout the world for its justice. On every Roman official's desk there was the little figure of the two-faced god, Janus. One face looked forward and the other face looked backward. (It is from this word that we get the name January for the month that looks back to the old year and forward to the new year.) Janus was to remind the judge to look at both sides of the question. Rome ruled the world for nearly one thousand years. When the Romans took over a people, they promised them good roads, law and order, protection, and peace -- but life would be under a dictatorship. Rome ruled with an iron hand. In Roman courts the innocent got justice, and the guilty got justice -- not mercy, but justice. The interesting

thing that makes this such an anomaly is that the trial of Jesus was one of the greatest miscarriages of justice.

### **Death Of Jesus At Golgotha (19:1-37)**

Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him.

And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe,

And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands [[John 19:1-3](#)].

If Jesus was innocent, He should have been turned loose. If He was guilty of the charge brought against Him, He should have been crucified. To scourge Jesus was entirely unlawful and wrong. Pilate did it because he thought this would placate the Jews.

The soldiers took this opportunity to have their fun with Him before He was crucified. When it says "they smote him with their hands," it means they played a cruel Roman game with Him. They could mutilate Him and do anything they wished with Him. All the soldiers would show the prisoner their fists. Then they would blindfold the prisoner and all but one would hit him as hard as they could. Then they would remove the blindfold, and if the prisoner was still conscious he was to guess which soldier did not hit him. Obviously, the prisoner could never guess the right one. They would continue this until they had beaten the prisoner to a pulp. I believe that the Lord Jesus was so mutilated that you would not have recognized Him. "As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men" ([Isa. 52:14](#)).

Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him.

Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man! [[John 19:4-5](#)].

Now they come outside again. I think that if you had seen Him then, it would have broken your heart. He had been beaten within an inch of His life. Don't think He looked like the artists picture Him.

"Behold the man!" If you have said only this that Pilate said, you haven't seen Him at all. He is more than a man. He is the Son of God. He is the Savior of the world. John has written these things so that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you might have life in His name.

When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him [[John 19:6](#)].

It may have been at this point that Pilate called for the basin of water and washed his hands. The water would clean his hands but could not cleanse the guilt of his heart. The oldest creed of the church states that Jesus was crucified under Pontius Pilate.

The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.

When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid;

And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer [[John 19:7-9](#)].

Pilate is not satisfied, and so he takes Him inside again to question Him.

Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?

Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin [[John 19:10-11](#)].

There are differences of sin and differences of judgment. Those who delivered Jesus to Pilate had the greater sin because they had more light than Pilate did. However, that does not exonerate Pilate at all. He is guilty.

And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar [[John 19:12](#)].

From thenceforth Pilate sought to release Him. Because he believed in Him? No. Because he knew that the Lord Jesus was an innocent man.

Jesus is now in the hands of a cheap politician -- not the judge of Roman justice that Pilate should have been. These Jewish religious rulers are prepared to report Pilate to Rome accusing him of permitting subversion. That would be treason, and Pilate doesn't want such a charge against him. Pilate will let his political position overrule his justice. It is a terrible thing, even today, when government, whether it be church or state government, gets into the hands of men who are hungry for power and do not regard either God or man.

When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha [[John 19:13](#)].

The Pavement was the Lithostrotos. It was the place of Roman justice. Julius Caesar always carried a moveable one with him so that anywhere he went, the Lithostrotos was set up, and there he pronounced his judgments. This Gabbatha is one place in Jerusalem which I think is accurately identifiable. It is about fifteen feet below the present level of the Ecce Homo Street. There is the worn stone which I think may well be the Pavement, the Gabbatha.

And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!

But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him.  
Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests  
answered, We have no king but Caesar [[John 19:14-15](#)].

Notice the dignity of the Lord Jesus through all this. Notice that He is not the one on trial. Pilate is forced to a choice. Will it be Jesus Christ or Caesar? The religious leaders are forced to a choice. Will it be Jesus Christ or Caesar? They make their dreadful choice, "We have no king but Caesar." The day will come in the future when they will have to make another choice. Jesus Christ or the Antichrist? Friend, listen; every man must make his choice about Jesus Christ. He says, "He that is not with me is against me . . ." ([Matt. 12:30](#)). The minute you make a decision against Christ, you make a decision for "Caesar."

Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And  
they took Jesus, and led him away [[John 19:16](#)].

We speak so often of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that it becomes almost trite for the average believer. The crucifixion of Jesus Christ is one of the most dastardly, infamous points in history. Yet, this is our redemption. We need to pause here and look at it from various points of view.

From the standpoint of God, the Cross is a propitiation. It is the mercy seat where God can extend mercy to you and to me. It is the place where full satisfaction was made, so that a holy, righteous God can reach down and save sinners. The very throne of God, the place of judgment, is transformed into the place of mercy where you and I can find mercy instead of the judgment we deserve. Jesus Christ bore our guilt, and God is satisfied.

From the standpoint of the Lord Jesus, it is a sacrifice. He is the Savior, and He makes Himself an offering for sin. He is a sweet-smelling savor to God. It is also an act of obedience for Him. Paul tells us in [Philippians 2:8](#) that he became obedient to death, even the death of the cross.

From the standpoint of you and me, believers in Christ Jesus, it was a substitution. He took my place and He took your place. He was the sinless One suffering for the sinner. He was the just One suffering for the unjust. "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" ([1Pet. 2:24](#)).

From the standpoint of Satan, it was a triumph and also a defeat. It was a triumph for Satan to bruise the heel of the woman's seed as had been foretold way back in [Genesis 3](#). It was a defeat because the head of Satan is yet to be crushed: ". . . that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" ([Heb. 2:14](#)).

From the standpoint of the world, the Cross is nothing but a brutal murder. They see Jesus of Nazareth. They see the man. They see the injustice.

So they led Him away to be crucified. This fulfills [Psalm 94:20-21](#): "Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law? They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent blood."

And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha:

Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst [[John 19:17-18](#)].

John does not give us a picture of the Crucifixion. He mentions the place but gives very few details. General Gordon, never satisfied with the spot inside the city walls which is pointed out as Golgotha, decided upon a rocky, skull-like formation outside the city walls, called Gordon's Calvary, which I believe to be the actual Golgotha.

You will recall that every bit of the sin offering was taken outside the camp into a clean place (see [Lev. 4:12](#)). Just as the Lord Jesus fulfilled prophecy concerning Himself, so He also fulfills the types in the Old Testament. Our sin offering, the Lord Jesus Christ, was taken outside the city. The writer to the Hebrews emphasizes the fact that our Lord suffered outside the gate (see [Heb. 13:12](#)).

And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS [[John 19:19](#)].

You will notice that I have made no attempt to harmonize the other Gospels with the Gospel of John. They are each different, and each is written for a different purpose. You need to put all four of them together to find the complete statement written on the Cross.

This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin.

Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews.

Pilate answered, What I have written I have written [[John 19:20-22](#)].

It was written in Hebrew, the language of religion. It was written in Greek, the language of culture and education. It was written in Latin, the language of law and order. Thus, it was written for the whole world to see that He died for all. This is the gospel that is to be preached to the world. This is the hope of the world.

Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout.

They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did [[John 19:23-24](#)].

"When they had crucified Jesus." No Gospel writer describes the death of Christ. There are things about the Cross and the Crucifixion that are hidden from us. God pulls down a veil on many of the details. Darkness covered the land so the people couldn't see. First of all, God is not going to give us morbid details simply to satisfy our idle curiosity.



Secondly, there was a transaction between the Father and the Son taking place there. It was a transaction for the sins of the world, which is beyond our comprehension. The only thing that we can do is to accept by faith the forgiveness that is made ours through Christ's death on the Cross. That is the only way you and I will ever penetrate that darkness, my friend.

Apparently His garment is a peasant's garment but a good one. Someone had made it for Him. The soldiers cast lots for it -- shot dice at the foot of the Cross. Although these Romans do not know it, they are fulfilling the Scriptures: "They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture" ([Ps. 22:18](#)).

Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.

When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son!

Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home [[John 19:25-27](#)].

Jesus calls Mary, "Woman," just as He had in [John 2](#) at the wedding at Cana. His hour is come. He is to die, but He will rise again. He is to be glorified. His relationship to His mother is to be severed. To her, as well as to us, He is to be the glorified Christ. His resurrection will clear her name forever. Her reputation will be vindicated. But she must come to Christ in faith just as every other believer comes. While He is dying for the sins of the world, He will not neglect her. We know that Mary will be praying with the disciples in the Upper Room after His resurrection (see [Acts 1:14](#)), and after that she drops out of the picture. As long as she lived John would keep her in his home and care for her, as the Lord Jesus asked him to do.

After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.

Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth.

When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost [[John 19:28-30](#)].

John carefully shows us that scripture is being fulfilled. There are chapters in the Old Testament which are especially concerned with the Crucifixion. I would list [Psalm 22](#), [Genesis 22](#), [Isaiah 53](#), and [Leviticus 16](#). There are twenty-eight prophecies fulfilled while He was hanging on the Cross. "I thirst" is the fulfillment of [Psalm 69:21](#).

"It is finished!" What was finished? Your redemption and my redemption was finished. In His report to the father He had said, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" ([John 17:4](#)).

The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him.

But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs:

But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.

And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.

For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.

And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced [[John 19:31-37](#)].

The first prophecy which John mentions was fulfilled. It says "He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken" ([Ps. 34:20](#)). The second one still awaits fulfillment. ". . . they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son . . ." ([Zech. 12:10](#)). He has been pierced! That part has been fulfilled. But Zechariah says that He shall return again, and when He comes, then they shall look upon the One whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him.

### **Burial In The Tomb Of Joseph (19:38-42)**

We are dealing with facts, the great historical facts of the gospel. What is the gospel? Paul defines it for us. "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures" ([1Cor. 15:3-4](#)). These are the central facts of the gospel. Our salvation is based on our relationship to those facts and to the person of Jesus Christ. Do you trust Him? Do you have faith in what He did for you when He died on the Cross? Do you believe that He died a vicarious, substitutionary, redemptive death for you?

And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus.

And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight.

Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury [[John 19:38-40](#)].

The two men who handle the body of Jesus are both prominent men. Joseph of Arimathaea is a rich man, and Nicodemus is the ruler of the Jews who had come to Jesus by night. They were both secret disciples, but now they come out in the open for the first time. Let's not be too critical of these men. They had stayed in the background but, now

that the Lord's disciples have all scattered like sheep and gone under cover, these two men come out in the open.

Because the children of Israel had lived in Egypt, some believe that they were the ones who perfected the method of embalming that the Egyptians used. The child of God in the Old Testament as well as the New Testament has always believed that the body will rise again. It is sown in corruption; it will be raised in incorruption. It is sown in weakness; it will be raised in power. It will be a glorified body. For that reason, the child of God has a reverence and a care for the body.

The custom was to use about half the body weight of spices; so we can guess that the Lord Jesus weighed about two hundred pounds. They would prepare the body by rubbing it with myrrh and aloes, then wrapping it with linen strips. That would seal it and keep out the air. They would begin with a finger, then wrap all the fingers that way, then the hand, the arm, and the whole body. In other words, they wrapped the body of the Lord Jesus like a mummy. Now John mentions specifically that they wrapped the body in the linen cloth using the spices, because this is a very important detail for him. You remember that on the resurrection morning, when John saw the linen lying there and the body not in it, he understood that the Resurrection had taken place, and he believed.

Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid.

There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand [[John 19:41-42](#)].

They had to hurry because of the approaching Passover, and apparently they didn't get the embalming process completely finished. This explains why the women bought more spices and planned to come to care for the body of the Lord after the feast day.

This moves us into the next glorious chapter.

## Chapter 20

**THEME:** Resurrection of Jesus; appearance to Mary; appearance to the disciples; appearance to Thomas

This is the resurrection chapter as it is recorded in John's Gospel. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the very heart-blood of the Christian faith. It is so important that someone has said, "We cannot make too much of the death of Christ, but we can make too little of the resurrection of Christ." That is the thing that is happening today. Theology books, hymns of the church, sermons, all devote sections to the death of Christ. Too often the resurrection of Christ is observed only on Easter. We should note that the sermons in the New Testament, beginning at Pentecost, have the resurrection of Jesus Christ as their theme.

### Resurrection Of Jesus (20:1-10)

The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre [[John 20:1](#)].

"The first day of the week," that is, Sunday, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb. When was the Sabbath Day changed? This question is often asked by folk who believe we should be observing Saturday as the day of rest and worship. It was changed when Jesus Christ arose from the dead. He was dead during the Sabbath Day; He became alive on Sunday. From that time on, believers have been gathering together on the first day of the week. The Sabbath Day belongs to the old creation. After God had created everything, He rested on the Sabbath Day. Now we have come to the new creation in Christ Jesus. Pentecost occurred on Sunday, the first day of the week. It is interesting that John, the last of the Gospel writers, emphasizes that it was the first day of the week when Jesus rose from the dead.

It will be helpful to get in our minds the order of events on this morning of the Resurrection. I quote from a footnote in The Scofield Reference Bible, page 1043.

Three women, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, start for the sepulchre, followed by other women bearing spices. The three find the stone rolled away, and Mary Magdalene goes to tell the disciples ([Lk. 23:55](#) -- [Lk. 24:9](#); [John 20:1-2](#)). Mary, the mother of James and Joses, draws nearer the tomb and sees the angel of the Lord ([Mt. 28:2](#)). She goes back to meet the other women following with the spices. Meanwhile Peter and John, warned by Mary Magdalene, arrive, look in, and go away ([John 20:3-10](#)). Mary Magdalene returns weeping, sees the two angels and then Jesus ([John 20:11-18](#)), and goes as He bade her to tell the disciples. Mary (mother of James and Joses), meanwhile, has met the women with the spices and, returning with them, they see the two angels ([Lk. 24:4-5](#); [Mk. 16:5](#)). They also receive the angelic message, and, going to seek the disciples, are met by Jesus ([Mt. 28:8-10](#)).

Mary Magdalene was the one from whom the Lord had cast seven demons. Some Bible students think she was the sinful woman who wiped the feet of Jesus with her hair. This is an assumption which cannot be proved. I take it that she was a person of very high caliber. She was eternally grateful to the Lord for healing her. When she saw the body was not here, she immediately ran to tell John and Peter.

Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him [[John 20:2](#)].

The disciple "whom Jesus loved" is John. He always refers to himself in this way rather than by name. Any of the disciples, except Judas, could have used this title for himself. You can use it for yourself. [Jude 1:21](#) says, "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." Keep yourself in the love of God, because you know that He loves you. You can't keep Him from loving you! It is wonderful to take that position for yourself as John did: "the other disciple, whom Jesus loved."

We find Simon Peter and John together. Apparently John has taken him in. I wonder if some of the other disciples, when they heard of Peter's denial, had pushed him to the outside. Thank God, John took him in at a time when Peter desperately needed someone

to befriend him. John, the son of thunder, has become the apostle of love. What a wonderful thing that is.

Mary Magdalene was not expecting the Resurrection. Her thought was that someone had stolen away the Lord's body. Isn't it interesting that the religious rulers would later accuse the disciples of stealing the Lord's body, and that Mary's first thought was that the religious rulers had stolen the Lord's body? (The religious rulers would have given everything in the world if they could have produced the body on that first Sunday!)

Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.

So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre [[John 20:3-4](#)].

Simon Peter and John were not expecting the Resurrection. They probably thought that Mary didn't really see well in the dark. She saw the stone rolled away, became frightened, and ran. Or maybe she went to the wrong tomb. So they rush to the cemetery. Friend, you don't go into a cemetery to look for the living. They were not expecting to look for the living. They were not expecting to find Jesus alive when they rushed to the tomb. They were expecting to find the Lord's body.

This "other disciple" was John. He was a younger man and could outrun Simon Peter. This confirms tradition that John was probably the youngest of the disciples. I am of the opinion that these men represented quite an age span. John may have been in his late teens.

And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in [[John 20:5](#)].

What John saw convinced him that Jesus had risen from the dead. He got there first, but because he had a certain amount of reticence and reverence, he didn't go in. He stooped down to look in through the very small entrance that was hewn out of the stone. He saw the evidence that convinced him. It is amazing how God uses little things like this to bring conviction to the hearts of men. Someone has said, "Great doors swing on little hinges." John saw the linen cloth lying there, but the body had gone out of it.

Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie [[John 20:6](#)].

Then here comes Simon Peter puffing and blowing. I tell you, it was hard on him to run. Reticence is not one of his qualities; so he goes right into the sepulchre. He, too, sees the linen clothes and the wrapping that was around His head. Remember that Joseph and Nicodemus had wrapped our Lord's body in the linen and had sealed it with the myrrh and aloes, which made a sort of glue to seal in the body. How could the body get out of such an encasement without unwinding all that linen?

Jesus Christ came up out of that tomb just like a seed comes out of the soil. Remember He had said that a grain of corn falls to the ground and remains alone unless it dies. Then new corn will grow out of it. But the old shell of the seed is still in the ground. That is

what was left in the tomb -- just the old shell that He had been in. He was no longer in that shell. He was alive.

Do you remember that when the Lord Jesus raised Lazarus, he came forth from the grave all wrapped in the graveclothes and the Lord had to tell them to loose Lazarus? Lazarus came out in his old body wrapped in the old graveclothes. The body of Lazarus would have to die again. However, Jesus Christ came forth in a glorified body which will never see death. This is the Resurrection!

And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed [[John 20:7-8](#)].

God carefully records through John another small but important detail. The napkin that was wrapped around His head lay there intact, separate from the linen wound around His body. It was in the shape of the head, lying just as it had been folded around the head. I think this convinced Peter that the Lord had risen. There are three different Greek words used in this passage, and they are all translated as "seeing." This is unfortunate. In [verse 5](#), when John stooped down, looked in and saw, the word means to perceive and understand. It involves inspection and perceiving. In [verse 6](#), when Peter went in and saw, the word used is theaomai from which we get our word theater. He viewed it. In [verse 8](#), when John went into the sepulchre and saw, it means to know. He knew and he believed before he ever saw the risen Christ.

For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

Then the disciples went away again unto their own home [[John 20:9-10](#)].

John tells us something strange. These men had not understood even though Jesus had told them repeatedly that He would rise from the dead, and even though the Old Testament spoke of this. Even today we need the New Testament as sort of a flashlight to go back and interpret the Old Testament. I believe that one of the reasons the Old Testament is not popular is because we do not sufficiently use the New Testament to interpret it.

There are a great many of us today who read the Bible but still do not know certain scriptures. I believe there are two reasons for this. One is that we may read a passage many times and each time see things in the passage that we have never seen before. The Holy Spirit gives us further light as we study and read the passages over and over again. Also I believe that we must experience some of the scriptures to understand their meaning. The trials and sufferings and experiences of life explain their meaning to us. For example, when David wrote that the Lord was his Shepherd, he knew from experience the shepherd-care of God.

### **Appearance To Mary (20:11-17)**

Apparently Mary is the first one to whom the Lord appeared. There are eleven appearances before His ascension and three after His ascension. I think we can surmise from the text that there are others which were not described.

A proverb can be found for all situations. For those who ask why Jesus appeared first to Mary Magdalene, [Proverbs 8:17](#) says: "I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me." She sought Him and she sought Him early.

But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept,  
she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre,

And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the  
other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto  
them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not  
where they have laid him.

And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw  
Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest  
thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir,  
if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him,  
and I will take him away [[John 20:11-15](#)].

Again we are interested in the fact that she does not know Him. Do you know why? She does not believe that He is back from the dead. Unbelief is blind and unbelief is dumb, as in the case of Zacharias. She loves Him, yes, but love must be coupled with faith. She is weeping because she loves Him but also because she does not believe.

How much is the glorified body changed? I don't know, but I don't think the change is so great that this accounts for her lack of recognition of Jesus. I believe that Mary is absolutely single-minded in her grief. Although she sees two angels, this doesn't seem to draw her attention in any particular way. They ask a question, not because they don't know the answer, but because they are trying to arouse some evidence of faith in Mary. She is single-minded in her answer. He is still dead, and the probable answer is that the body has been stolen, as Mary reasons it out. She does not expect to see Christ alive; and, in her unbelief, she does not recognize Him.

Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him,  
Rabboni; which is to say, Master [[John 20:16](#)].

When He called her by name, she recognized the voice as only He could speak. I am of the opinion that if the Lord should tarry and all of us go through the doorway of death, our bodies will be raised when He calls us by name someday, just as He called by name those whom He raised from the dead over nineteen hundred years ago.

Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to  
my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend  
unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God  
[[John 20:17](#)].



The Lord told Mary not to touch Him. The word touch is haptomai, meaning "to hold on." Later, He told the disciples to touch Him. Why this difference? He says to her, "for I am not yet ascended to my Father." This is the reason she should not hold on to Him. So apparently He did ascend to His Father before the appearance to the disciples in the house. I believe that the Lord Jesus presented His blood at the throne of God and that His blood turned the judgment seat into the mercy seat which it is today. That blood was shed for your sin and for my sin. I think the blood will be there throughout all eternity as an eternal testimony of the price He paid for us.

You will notice He was specific in calling God "my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." His relationship to the Father is different from our relationship to Him. We become the sons of God through faith in Jesus Christ, while Christ is a member of the Trinity, the eternal Son of God. He made this distinction here.

### **Appearance To The Disciples (20:18-23)**

Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.

Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you [[John 20:18-19](#)].

This group of men had scattered when He was crucified, but now, apparently, had regathered and were hidden away in a room because they were frightened. The doors were shut, which actually means they were locked.

Have you noticed that when the supernatural touches the natural the message is always "Peace" or "Fear not"? His word to them now, when His deity touches their humanity, is "Peace." This is the peace that comes from being justified by faith through our Lord Jesus Christ, which gives us peace with God.

Here, you see, they knew Him when they saw Him. These men were frightened, of course. He appeared in His glorified body and came into the room even though the doors were locked. We learn from this that the glorified body is not subject to the laws of the material universe. That is why I believe that when the Rapture occurs and our bodies are changed, there will be no problem for us to meet the Lord in the air.

And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord [[John 20:20](#)].

Notice, that even though He has a glorified body, there are the nail prints and the pierced side. There is a strange similarity to that body which had been nailed to the Cross. The scars are there. Now I do not think that there will be scars on our bodies. I think these scars are on His body because they are the scars He bore for us. He was scarred for us so that you and I might be presented without spot or blemish before Him. He took our sin and this will be the evidence of it throughout eternity.

Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you [[John 20:21](#)].

I do not think the Lord is just repeating Himself. I think this is a different peace here. In [verse 19](#), it was the peace of redemption -- peace with God. Redemption is now complete. This is the peace described in [Matthew 11:28](#): "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." This is the rest of redemption, the peace of redemption.

There is another peace. It is the peace of those who are in fellowship with God and are doing His will. This is the peace described in [Matthew 11:29](#): "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

Redemption is now accomplished. Now Christ sends them out as the Father had sent Him into the world. He had previously mentioned this in His prayer, "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world" ([John 17:18](#)).

And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost [[John 20:22](#)].

This period of history is a transition period between law and grace. There is an interval in the life of these men and in the ministry of the Lord Jesus between His death and resurrection and the Day of Pentecost. This is a time unique in the history of the world.

Our Lord had told them about prayer back in [Luke 11](#). He had said that if they would ask, it should be given to them. In [verse 13](#) of that chapter, He says that He is speaking especially of the gift of the Holy Spirit which the heavenly Father would give to them who ask Him. Well, as nearly as we can tell they never asked! In [John 14:16](#) Jesus says, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter." It is true that Simon Peter showed some discernment when he said that Jesus is the Christ, but it was just a few minutes later that he told Jesus not to go to the Cross to die. I personally believe that at the moment our Lord breathed on them, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," these men were regenerated. Before this, they had not been indwelt by the Spirit of God.

This expression "breathed on them" occurs only one other time in the Bible. In Genesis, God breathed into Adam the breath of life. I believe here that Jesus Christ breathed into these men eternal life by giving them the Spirit of God. This would sustain them and secure them for the interval between His ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.

On the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit would come and they would be baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ. Also they would be indued with power from on high. The church would come into existence on that day. From that time to the present, the Holy Spirit is in the world. He indwells the believer, and He baptizes every believer into the body of Christ.

Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained [[John 20:23](#)].

This is an important verse which is greatly misunderstood. John Calvin writes: "When Christ enjoins the apostles to forgive sins, He does not convey to them what is peculiar to

Himself. It belongs to Him to forgive sins. He only enjoins them in His name to proclaim the forgiveness of sins."

Nowhere in the Book of Acts or in the Epistles do we find any instance of an apostle remitting the sins of anyone. They do go everywhere, proclaiming the forgiveness of sins. Let me ask the question: What is it that forgives sins? Even God cannot just arbitrarily forgive sins. Forgiveness of sins is only and alone through the blood of Jesus Christ. Back in the Old Testament, the forgiveness of sins was based on the fact that Christ would come and die. God saved "on credit" in the Old Testament until Christ would come and pay the penalty. Today God forgives our sins when we believe that Christ died for them.

How can you and I remit sins? By telling the gospel! This is the greater work which we shall do. When somebody turned and believed on Jesus while He was here on earth, that was wonderful. But what is staggering is when you or I simply give out the Word of God, and someone is born again and becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus. "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them" happens when you and I proclaim the gospel of the grace of God. That is the most glorious privilege that there is today, my friend.

We have a responsibility. If we do not preach the gospel to the world, their sins will not be remitted. I think we are reaping the penalty for the years we have not taken the gospel to the world. Because we have neglected our responsibility, our boys die in war. Just think, if all the boys we have lost in war had been willing to lose their lives for Christ and be missionaries, how different the world might be! We have the only thing that will bring forgiveness to the world. It is the gospel of Jesus Christ. My friend, what are you doing?

### **Appearance To Thomas (20:24-31)**

But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came [[John 20:24](#)].

I can only surmise why Thomas was not there. I think he was a lone wolf and a doubter. He would cast gloom on every situation. I believe the other ten disciples were excitedly talking about Jesus being raised from the dead and Thomas just couldn't believe it.

The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe [[John 20:25](#)].

Boy, is he a doubter! He has enough evidence to make him a believer, but he is not. But at least now it appears that he will stay with the other disciples.

My friend, if you are going to grow in grace, you will have to come together with the saints and grow with them. I believe you have to share what you learn from the Word of the Lord. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" ([Heb. 10:25](#)). We are to come together so we may grow together.

And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.

Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.

And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God [[John 20:26-28](#)].

The record doesn't tell us that he ever reached forth his hand to touch Him. He didn't have to. I know that today there are many people who say, "If only I could see Him, if only I could touch Him, then I would believe." The problem is not with the lack of available evidence of the death and Resurrection. The problem is in the human heart.

God will meet the honest doubt of a man, but I do not think He deals with dishonest doubts. Many people say they can't believe the Bible. They claim their problem is intellectual. Friend, most people will not believe the Bible because of moral problems. A man told me just the other day that he couldn't believe the Old Testament. Later I learned that he is living in adultery. The Old Testament says "Thou shalt not commit adultery" ([Exod. 20:14](#)). He doesn't want to believe the Old Testament. However, I am confident that God will always meet an honest doubter.

You will never find a higher testimony to the Lord Jesus than the one given by Thomas. It is one of the great confessions of Scripture. For a Jew to say "My Lord and my God" is the absolute climax. This comes from the lips of that doubter, Thomas.

Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed [[John 20:29](#)].

There is a special blessing on us today who believe the evidence for the death and resurrection of Christ.

And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:

But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name [[John 20:30-31](#)].

This is the key to the gospel. The Lord did many things that are not recorded. He healed multitudes. I think John also means that He did many other things after His resurrection which are not recorded. John has been selective in his writing of this Gospel. He has chosen the material which he has written because he had a definite purpose in mind.

John did not attempt to write a biography of Jesus Christ. He did not even attempt to fill in the life of Christ in areas not covered by the other Gospels. He wrote so that you might "believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." It is through believing that you receive life and are born again. You become a child of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

## Chapter 21

**THEME:** Epilogue -- Glorification; the resurrected Jesus is still God; Lord of our wills -- Directs our service; Lord of our hearts -- Motive for service; Lord of our minds -- Lack of knowledge no excuse from service

Chapter 21 is an epilogue. I believe that after John had written his Gospel, he added the prologue and the epilogue.

There are three incidents in this chapter. There is the fishing experience on the Sea of Galilee (also called the Sea of Tiberias). It shows the Lord Jesus as the Lord of our wills, and He directs our service. The second incident is the breakfast on the seashore. This shows the Lord Jesus as the Lord of our hearts and presents our love for Him as the motive for service. The third incident is Jesus announcing the death of Simon Peter. It shows the Lord Jesus as the Lord of our minds and teaches that lack of knowledge or variation of circumstance is no excuse from service. The entire chapter reveals to us that the resurrected Jesus is still God.

### **Lord Of Our Wills -- Directs Our Service (21:1-11)**

After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he himself.

There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.

Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a-fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing [[John 21:1-3](#)].

This little Sea of Galilee is so much connected with the ministry of our Lord both before and after His resurrection. It is a familiar spot for these men. He had asked them to go up into Galilee and there He would meet them. They have gone there, and they are waiting for Him.

This is an amazing group here. I like to call this the convention of the problem children. Here is Simon Peter, fervent but failing, warm-hearted, yet walking afar off; he is impulsive and impetuous and affectionate. Then here is Thomas, that magnificent skeptic, who has a question mark for a brain; Nathanael, the wisecracker, who was also a doubter at the beginning; the sons of thunder, James and John; and two others who are not named. Perhaps, since this is a crowd of problem children, they represent you and me.

Many worthy commentators condemn these men for going fishing. Well, the Lord did not rebuke them when He appeared to them. They were at Galilee by His commandment. It was springtime, the Passover season. Warm zephyrs from the south made ripples near the shore and whitecaps out on the sea. The surrounding hills were green, and there were wild flowers in profusion. I saw it like that a few days after Easter several years ago, and I imagine it was even more beautiful nineteen hundred years ago. They may have waited and waited for the Lord Jesus to come. Peter would be the one to become impatient, and

after pacing back and forth and after looking up and down the shore, would be the one to say, "I go a-fishing." And six others joined him.

They fished all night and caught nothing. This may be the only true fish story that has been told! Dr. Scotts calls it the failure of the experts. Now these men fished all night, and they caught nothing. They had been restless before, and now they are restless and frustrated. It's easy to fish when you catch fish and frustrating when you don't. They knew how to fish -- that's the way they made their living -- but that night of failure was in the plan and purpose of God for them.

Then morning dawned, and it must have been a glorious morning on the Sea of Galilee. On the morning I was there, I just felt like shouting when I thought of this incident.

But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore:  
but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus [[John 21:4](#)].

I think this was a normal experience. He was in His glorified body and He could be recognized; yet they would have been a distance out on the lake, and in the early morning it would be difficult to identify people on the shore.

Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They  
answered him, No [[John 21:5](#)].

The word for children is almost like saying, "Sirs." It is not a term of endearment like "Little children" in 1 John. Their answer is a short "No." It's amazing how emphatic one can be and how little one likes to talk about failure. They answer Him, but they don't want to talk about it. If they had caught any fish, they all would have been showing Him how long they were.

This is a question He is bound to ask every one of us someday: "Did you catch anything? What did you do for men down there on earth?" I hope your answer will not be the same as theirs, "No, we haven't caught a thing."

And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship,  
and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able  
to draw it for the multitude of fishes [[John 21:6](#)].

The whole thought here is that He directs the lives of His own. He gives the instructions, and they are to be obeyed. When they fish according to His instruction, the net fills. Notice the net does not break even though it is full. The net is strong -- as strong as the gospel of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, of which they are witnesses.

Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the  
Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his  
fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself  
into the sea [[John 21:7](#)].

John has a spiritual perception that Simon Peter doesn't have. Three years before, Jesus had called them at perhaps the same spot. They had gone back to fishing and the Lord had called them again to fish for the souls of men.

Peter may not have the discernment of John, but have you noticed that at every opportunity he gets close to the Lord? The other men sit in the boat and wait until they get to shore. Not Simon Peter. He can't wait. He wants to be close to his Lord. This man is a wonderful man.

And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes.

As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.

Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.

Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken [[John 21:8-11](#)].

This is the last recorded miracle of our Lord, and the only miracle recorded after His resurrection. This is most important because you and I are concerned about the ministry of Christ after His resurrection. Paul says, "... yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more" ([2Cor. 5:16](#)). We are not joined to the baby in Bethlehem but to a resurrected, living, glorified Christ at God's right hand. This is why His ministry after His resurrection is so vital for us.

There are several things I would like to call to your attention here. Have you noticed that the Lord uses what people have as the basis for His miracles? The disciples are fishing and catch nothing. The Lord Jesus gives them a harvest of fish. At Cana the water pots were empty. The Lord has the pots filled with water and then changes the water to wine. He asks Moses what he has in his hand. Moses says it is a rod, and with that rod, God performs His miracles for Israel. David is faithful as a shepherd with his shepherd's crook, and God gives him a sceptre to hold in his hand. It is interesting that whatever is in your hand, God can use. So many people wish they were somewhere else or in some other circumstances. My friend, if God can't use you right where you are, I don't think He can use you somewhere else.

Besides, have you ever noticed that what God does He does in abundance? The water pots were full of wine. There were baskets of food left over after the 5,000 had been fed. The nets were filled with fish.

Also, notice that although Jesus had fish laid on a bed of coals for their breakfast on the shore of Galilee, He also asks for some of the fish which they had caught. He accepts their service. When they had fished at His command, He accepts what they bring. What blessed fellowship there is in this kind of service!

There was another time when Peter caught a miraculous number of fish, recorded by Luke. It was in the early days of Jesus' ministry, and He was calling Peter to be a fisher of men. That time the net broke. I think Peter was to see that many would follow Jesus, but they would not all be believers. The net would break and many fish would swim away. This time the net did not break but was drawn to land, "full of great fishes." Peter is being called to feed the sheep and feed the lambs. With what? With the Word of God. With the



gospel of a risen, glorified Christ. The gospel will not only save, but it will hold. Even in their failures, believers are kept by the power of God through faith.

We see in this incident that Jesus Christ has a purpose for His own. He wants to direct our lives. If we obey, He will bless and have wonderful fellowship with us. He is the Lord of our wills.

### **Lord Of Our Hearts -- Motive For Service (21:12-17)**

Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.

Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.

This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead [[John 21:12-14](#)].

"Come and dine" -- what an invitation! Jesus did say, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel" (see [Mark 16:15](#)), but He would rather you would come and have breakfast with Him before you go. The lovely part is that the resurrected Lord, God Himself, feeds them. If only we would sit today and let Him feed us! He wants to feed His own.

Now we come to the special interview that He had with Simon Peter.

So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.

He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep [[John 21:15-17](#)].

Our Lord takes Simon Peter and calls this faltering, failing, fumbling disciple to service. We learn one all-important lesson from this interview. Love for the Savior is the prerequisite for service.

Three times our Lord interrogates Simon Peter, and three times he responds. Then we find that three times the Lord Jesus Christ gives him his commission.

Why three times? Dr. Godet suggests that the reason lies in the fact that Simon Peter denied Christ three times, and now He makes him affirm his devotion three times. No doubt that is part of the reason, but there is more.

It is quite interesting to note that Simon Peter, with the other disciples, had been called to the ministry -- actually had been called into the apostleship -- after a miraculous catch of fish. If you will recall the account of this fishing experience back in the Gospels of Mark

and Luke you will refresh your mind in the fact that it was after our Lord took over the directing of their fishing that the nets broke -- and after that He made them apostles.

Then you will further recall that Simon Peter lost his commission around a little fire of coals that had been built in the courtyard of the palace of the high priest the night Jesus was arrested. Simon Peter went blundering in there to warm his hands and made the fatal mistake of his life. It was there he denied the Lord three times. He should not have gone there, but he did; and when he did, he committed this base denial.

Is it not an interesting thing that now by the Sea of Galilee, around coals of fire, after a miraculous catch of fish, the Lord Jesus restores his commission to him? Here the Lord puts Simon Peter back into service. What a picture of spiritual beauty!

When our Lord asked Peter the question three times, it looks like repetition, but it is not. While there is a similarity in the questions, no two are identical.

The first interrogation: "So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter [would that we could read this as our Lord said it that morning!], Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?" There are many who express the desire to have had the privilege of being present at certain great occasions in the life of our Lord -- when He performed miracles, etc. Candidly, I am not sure that I would want to go back to that day. However, if I could go back and hear Him speak to Simon Peter by the Sea of Galilee, I would go back gladly.

To begin with, He called him Simon. That is interesting -- "Simon, son of Jonas." Why did He call him Simon? You will recall when the Lord Jesus first met this man -- Andrew brought him to Jesus. When Jesus beheld him, He said (in effect), "Thou art Simon, son of Jonas, thou shalt be called Cephas, which by interpretation is a stone." Cephas is the Aramaic word for "rock man"; in Greek it is Petros. And that name clung to him. We find that over in Caesarea Philippi, when he gave that marvelous testimony concerning the Lord Jesus Christ and said, "Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God" ([John 6:69](#)), the Lord Jesus said in effect, "Blessed art thou, Simon [He goes back to his old name], you will be called Peter because you are going to be a rock man from here on. You will be a man who will stand for something, but right now there is still a question." And so the Lord reminds him of his old name.

There are three words in the Greek language that are translated into the English by the one word love. Perhaps, my friend, you are not aware of the fact that the English language is a beggar for words. We have the one word love and that is about all. You cannot think of another word. Hollywood, today, would give a million dollars for another word. The best they have done is sex and that is pretty low. But the Greek language is a language that is versatile; it is flexible. They have three words for this thing called love.

The first word they have is the word eros. In the use of this word they degraded the meaning of love. The Greeks degraded the word in this use for they personified it. The fact of the matter is they have made "Eros" a god and put together in combination the names Aphrodite and Eros. Today we know these names better as Venus and Cupid. The latter are the Roman names but they are the same, as the Greeks are the ones who started this idea with Aphrodite and Eros. Eros is a word of sensuality and we do believe that the

Hollywood word sex, that has really been put into high gear today, would best express what the Greeks had in mind. But this word eros is never used in the Word of God.

There is another Greek word -- it is phileo, and it means "friendship." It has to do with the affections and the emotions in human relations at its very best usage. We get our word philanthropic from it, and philadelphia comes from it -- Philadelphia, the city of "brotherly love." And that is a word that is used in Scripture.

But there is yet another word for love. It is agapao. Agapao is actually the highest and noblest word for love. Dr. Vincent in his Word Studies calls it a word of dignity. It is also a divine word, in that it is a word used to speak of the love of God. The Lord Jesus Christ, in His choice of language, passed over the words eros and phileo and used the word agapao when He was speaking to Simon Peter. He said, "Do you, Simon Peter, love me with all your heart?"

It is wonderful to have the right doctrine and the right creed, but salvation is a love affair. If you do not love Him, there is no affair. "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?" Love is the supreme word.

Candidly, if it had been left to me I would have chosen faith as the supreme word of Christianity. In fact, I would consider faith as the supreme word of any religion. But, of course, Scripture answers that right away: "And now abideth faith, hope, charity [love], these three; but the greatest of these is charity [love]" ([1Cor. 13:13](#)). But I'll tell you why I would choose faith -- it is a greater compliment to be trusted than to be loved. You see, there is many an old rascal today who is being loved by some wonderful girl. Yes, there is. Sometimes it is the other way around also. But, you see, the minute the object proves unworthy, he is no longer trusted. Will you think closely with me for a minute? Simon Peter had failed the Lord. Actually, the Lord could no longer have confidence in him, but He loved him. Oh, how He loved him!

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" ([John 15:13](#)). While Simon Peter was denying the Lord, the Lord Jesus was on His way to the Cross to die for him! Later, Peter wrote in his first epistle, "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" ([1Pet. 2:24](#)).

Now notice that our Lord's first question to Peter is, "Lovest thou me more than these?"

What He is saying is: "Do you love Me more than these men love me?" You will recall that the Lord Jesus said, the last time they were in the Upper Room, "One of you will deny Me" -- Simon doubtless thought, "Yes, I haven't trusted this crowd either. But there is one fellow here upon whom you can depend -- you can depend on me." The Lord Jesus said, "Simon, son of Jonas, are you prepared now to say that you love me more than these other disciples love Me?" That is what He is saying. Now listen to Simon Peter, "Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee." Here Simon came down and would not use the word agapao; he used the word phileo. He says, "You know that I have an affection for You."

Why did not Simon Peter use the word our Lord uses? If you want my opinion, this man is through boasting. Never again will he brag of what he will do. Never again will you

hear him saying, I am going to do something big for the Lord. For here on he is going to do something big, but he is not going to say anything about it. He comes to the low plain: "I have an affection for You."

Now will you notice the exhortation. Our Lord responds, "Feed my lambs." Let me give you a better translation: "Be grazing my baby lambs" -- the word for lambs is diminutive, which means little baby lambs. "Simon Peter, if you love Me I want you to go and graze the little baby lambs; I want you to feed them." Many Christians seem to think He said, "Be criticizing My little lambs." But He has not given you that commission, friend. He says feed them.

The second interrogation: Will you notice [verse 16](#), "He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep." This time our Lord leaves off "more than these." The reason I think He does it is that He is saying, "Maybe, Simon Peter, you cannot boast anymore and say that you love Me more than do the other disciples, but can you not now say that you do love Me?" In this He is helping this man, trying to lift him up to a higher plane. But Simon Peter just cannot. And somehow we admire him for it. We are glad that he is not boasting anymore. Instead he is willing to take a lower position. Listen to his affirmation: "Yes, Lord; thou knowest that I have an affection for thee." But he does not attempt to rise higher -- he does not dare to do this, for he is afraid to make such a gesture.

The second exhortation: Will you notice this second exhortation, which, incidentally, is ours also. "Feed my sheep." Actually it is not that at all, but rather, "Shepherd the sheep" -- that is the word that is used. We want you to notice something, and this is interesting: He says, "feed" the little baby lambs but "shepherd or discipline" the sheep. In our day we have this truth in reverse; we want to discipline the young -- that is our method, and we feel as if we should "teach" the old folk. My friend, that is not His method. We are to feed the lambs and shepherd or discipline the older sheep. Do you know why? It is because the little lambs follow the sheep, hence the older sheep must be disciplined.

The third interrogation: "He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" Christ now adopts the word of Simon Peter when He asks, "Simon Peter, do you really have an affection for Me?" Our translation does not show it, but our Lord comes down to the statement of Simon Peter here, and Peter is grieved now.

In the third affirmation -- "Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee."

Let us get at the real meaning of this conversation between our Lord and Simon Peter. Peter was grieved, not because the Lord had asked him the question three times, but he was grieved in his heart because the Lord had to come down and stoop to his level in using his word.

But Simon Peter is still not prepared to climb up. He as much as says that the best thing he can do is to say to the Lord that he has an affection for Him and that the Lord knows

he has this affection. He is not bragging now for he realizes that the Lord knows his heart -- that he has a real affection in his heart for Him.

The third exhortation is "Feed my sheep" -- here it has the meaning "be grazing my sheep." You see, the sheep need feeding also.

Milton suffered the loss of a friend, a young minister, who was drowned in the Irish Channel, in crossing; and Milton wrote a poem entitled "Lycidas," in which he made this statement: "The hungry sheep look up and are not fed." In this line he was referring to the pulpit in his day -- he might well have been writing of a future day which is ours.

Let me impress it upon your heart that the acid test of any man today, either in pulpit or pew, is "Lovest thou me?"

### **Lord Of Our Minds -- Lack Of Knowledge No Excuse From Service (21:18-25)**

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.

This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God [[John 21:18-19a](#)].

Jesus is telling Peter that he is to become a martyr. Peter had said he would lay down his life for the Lord Jesus. Well, that is what he will do.

And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?

Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? [[John 21:19b-21](#)].

Isn't this just like this fellow, Simon Peter? He says, "Now you have told me what I am going to do; tell me what John is going to do."

Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me [[John 21:22](#)].

Our Lord is saying, "Look, Simon Peter, you are going to die for me. What John does is none of your business. Even if he lives until I return, that does not affect what you are to do. You follow Me!"

Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?

This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true [[John 21:23-24](#)].

Here is something interesting. Ignorance, or lack of knowledge, is no excuse for not serving the Lord. Some people say they will not serve the Lord if they cannot get all their questions answered. My friend, there are a lot of things that you won't know. There are many things that you don't need to know. There are things that are not your business to know. The important thing is to follow Him.

Jesus did not reveal what would happen to John. He simply said that if it were His will for John not to die, that did not affect Peter's service or Peter's obligation to follow Jesus. That is all important for us to see.

Peter wrote in [2Peter 1:14](#): "Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me." Tradition says that he was crucified, but that he asked to be crucified with his head down because he was not worthy to be crucified with his head up, as his Lord had been crucified.

My friend, the Lord Jesus Christ must be the Lord of your mind, the Lord of your heart, and the Lord of your will. If He is not the Lord of all, then He cannot be the Lord of your life.

And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen [[John 21:25](#)].

John is not exaggerating when he says the whole world could not hold the books about Him if it all could be written. The Lord Jesus is the One who died on the Cross and rose again from the dead. He is the eternal God, our Savior.

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